SCRUTINY

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SCRUTINY

A Quarterly Review

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SCRUTINY

A Quarterly Review

Edited by

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F. R. LEAVIS DENYS THOMPSON

CONTENTS

THE ROBBER BARONS, by *Denys Thompson* *page* 2

ENGLISH POETRY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, by *F. R. Leavis* 13

PSYCHOLOGY AND CRITICISM, by *Richard March* 32

PSYCHOLOGY AND CRITICISM: A Comment, by *D. W. Harding* 44

SHAKESPEARE AND PROFIT INFLATIONS, by *L. C. Knights* 48

A NOTE ON HOPKINS AND DUNS SCOTUS, by *W. H. Gardner* 61

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS 71

RECENT PACIFIST LITERATURE, reviews by Denys Thompson (p. 71). THE REVOLUTIONARY SIMPLETON, *The Fate of the Middle Classes*, reviewed by E. W. F. Tomlin (p. 75). MR. ELIOT AND EDUCATION, *Essays Ancient and Modern*, reviewed by F. R. Leavis (p. 84). ONTOGENETICAL CRITICISM, *In Defence of Shelley*, reviewed by H. A. Mason (p. 90). ENGLISH NOVELISTS AND HIGHER REVIEWERS, *The English Novelists*, reviewed by Q. D. Leavis (p. 93). MR. E. M. FORSTER, *Abinger Harvest*, reviewed by Q. D. Leavis (p. (100). SHAKESPEARE AS A FORCE OF NATURE, *Shakespeare*, reviewed by R. G. Cox (p. 105). CRITICISM OF LIFE, *Strange Glory*, reviewed by Geoffrey Walton (p. 108). THE HIGHER EDUCATION OF WOMEN, reviews by Sylvia Legge (p. 110). INDIAN PROGRESSIVE WRITERS, *When One Is In It*, reviewed by Som Nath Chib (p. 113). *The Faber Book of Modern Verse* and *The Progress of Poetry*, reviewed by F. R. Leavis (p. 116). *The Burning Cactus*, reviewed by E. S. Huelin (p. 118). *An English Technique*, reviewed by T. R. Barnes (p. 120).

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THE ROBBER BARONS

A. *THE LIFE OF ANDREW CARNEGIE, by Burton J. Hendrick, 1933.*

B. *MELLON'S MILLIONS, by Harvey O'Connor (The John Day Co.), 1933.*

C. *GOD'S GOLD, the story of Rockefeller and his times, by John T. Flynn, 1933.*

D. *THIS UGLY CIVILISATION, by Ralph Borsodi (Harpers).*

E. *THE LORDS OF CREATION, by F. L. Allen, 1935.*

Carnegie was born in 1835 at Dunfermline, then a prosperous town of handweavers. The works of Cobbett were the family mentor; Carnegie's beliefs were pacifist and radical. Other relatives had gone to farm in Alleghany, Pennsylvania, and following them his family emigrated to America, where the young Carnegie was thrilled by machinery and its achievements. He was in succession bobbin boy, telegraph messenger, assistant railroad superintendent, bridge builder, steel maker, organizer of industry, and millionaire. (B) mentions that Carnegie the pacifist was charged by H. C. Frick with profiteering in the Spanish war: (A) is silent on this point, and also on the assertion of (B) that Carnegie made his first large profits out of the civil war.

Frequently he visited Scotland. He formed friendships with Matthew Arnold, Gladstone and John Morley. He financed respectable English radicals. He wrote a book, *Triumphant Democracy*, a panegyric of progress and American civilization. He was devoted to his mother and after her death preserved her rooms untouched. He married at fifty-one. In 1881 Carnegie enlisted H. C. Frick, who had no use for unions, and to whom labour was a commodity merely. For information about Frick and his background we must digress to (B).

'That year 1886 Frick gave his friend [Mellon] a lesson in labour relations. Noxious gases from his thousand ovens laid waste the lovely countryside of Fayette county. By day they fumed and by night they flared. The natives left. Frick imported Hungarians and South Slavs. His agents pushed into Southeastern Europe, luring hopeful peasants to the promised land with wage offers that seemed fantastic when translated into Old Country currencies.

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' The newcomers found themselves herded into drab, smoke-smudged company houses, whose huddles of clapboard shacks were checkered by muddy lanes, served by mediæval sanitary devices and a few common wells. The tightlipped presbyters of Pittsburgh believed the " Huns " were made of some inferior clay which thrived on the volatile gases given off by baking coal.

' Periodically the serfs rebelled against wages which proved small enough when measured against American prices, against the feudalism which insisted that they trade only at Frick stores in Frick scrip, against the Frick police which maintained a private brand of law and order. In 1880 the rising lord of the coke regions beat down a strike of his freshly imported workers with little trouble, but . . . they rebelled again on a rising market which left their wages stationary.' Strikes and unions were beaten down with starvation.

(A) excuses Frick:

' He had been unfortunate in the type of workman with whom he had previously dealt. The Hungarians, Slavs, and Southern Europeans of Connellsville were a savage and undisciplined horde, with whom strong-arm methods seemed at times indispensable, and when strikes broke out murder and arson became their favourite persuasions.'

But Carnegie had always dealt with the unions, disliking violence, and had tended to give way to strikes. Frick thought this weak. In 1890 after Carnegie had surrendered to two strikes of his cokemen, they presented a new ultimatum, and he left the situation in Frick's hands. As (A) puts it, ' the resulting chapter was a fierce one ; there were shootings, dynamitings, fire and murder ; the sheriff this time did his duty ; the Huns and Slavs were held at bay ; and Frick emerged a winner.' Again on the occasion of the Homestead Strike in 1892, Frick looked after Carnegie's interests while he was away in England ; the strikers occupied the works, and after the ' Pinkerton ' guards had tried to get them out, a pitched battle followed. And according to (C), ' When Henry C. Frick shocked the country by shooting down ruthlessly the striking ironworkers at Homestead, John D. Rockefeller wrote him a letter approving his course and expressing sympathy.'

To return to Carnegie. When war broke out in 1914, he approved. (His friend Morley resigned from the cabinet). He

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founded various trusts for the distribution of his wealth, and became the laird of Skibo—' a castle with mediæval battlements, Pittsburgh steel girders, Westinghouse dynamos,' etc., etc. He had in 1868 written a paper envisaging his retirement at 35, and the distribution of his fortune. ' " The amassing of wealth," he had written, " is one of the worst species of idolatry, no idol more debasing. To continue much longer overwhelmed by business cares and with most of my thoughts wholly upon the way to make more money in the shortest time, must degrade me beyond hope of permanent recovery." He had continued, it is true, to amass wealth, contenting himself, as time went on, with taking six months of vacation each year, and thereby escaping in some measure the degradation which he feared . . . ' (*The Lords Of Creation*). Later he enounced the Gospel of Wealth—' the surplus wealth of the few should be the property of the many . . . spent for public purposes, not scattered in trifling amounts . . . ' This provoked a Methodist, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, to denounce millionaires as a useless growth in a false economic world. ' If a man is so unfortunate as to have surplus wealth, he cannot do better than to act upon Mr. Carnegie's principles . . . But when I contemplate him as the representative of a particular class of millionaire, I am free to say . . . without holding him in the least responsible for his unfortunate circumstances, that he is an anti-Christian phenomenon, a social monstrosity, and a grave political peril . . . In a really Christian world—that is to say, in a community constructed on a Christian basis—a millionaire would be an economic impossibility.'

The book about Carnegie is the official life, long and dull. *Mellon's Millions* is a far more interesting book. Carnegie was the Industrious Apprentice, who piled up a fortune by himself. The Mellon wealth, on the other hand, was a family affair, founded by Judge Thomas Mellon, a Pittsburgh lawyer. The book is in the main about Andrew Mellon—the one who learnt to manage workmen from Frick. His masterpiece was not only to exploit the discovery of aluminium, but also to engineer a world-wide monopoly in it, which no law or injunction could shake. An instance of his power was the passing of a special law to enable his divorce case to be heard privately ; and when Mr. O'Connor tried to inspect the court records giving Mrs. Mellon's reply to her

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husband's charges, he found that the record had been removed. She said her first great disillusionment came ' when I learned that his people were not his people at all. I had dreamed of another Hertfordshire . . . I arrived in a strange land with strange people, strangers in a strange land. " They are foreign, Huns and Slavs, and such as that, and you can't do anything with them," I was told about the people whose affection I had dreamed of winning for my children. It was not only men. There were not only men. There were women and children, too, all toilers in my husband's vineyard ; but none of them given the labourer's recognition, toiling and working on the estate and adding to its wealth but not recognized as part of it. The whole community spirit was hard and cold as the steel it made, and it chilled the heart to the core,' etc.

There is an enlightening chapter *Petroleum Diplomacy* on the exploitation of Mexico and Venezuela, and the following chapter supplies much matter for a history of commercial imperialism, especially on conditions in the bauxite mines of British Guiana, whence came much of the raw material for making aluminium. Of Mellon himself Mr. O'Connor writes:

' Andrew Mellon did not stoop to the dusty, often bloody arena of labor management. He maintained an Olympian aloofness from the miner wielding his pick and shovel or the furnace man sweltering in the infernal heat of his aluminium " hot-rooms."

' Mellon could find no fault with the almost universal twelve-hour day in his industries. Union Steel under Mellon sway operated night and day on the two-shift system. So did Aluminium as late as 1929 in New Kensington.

' The twelve-hour day kept the myriads of " hunkies " who toiled in Mellon mills out of brawls and brothels, his managers contended. The miserable Alleghany and Monongahela river towns where they worked offered scant recreation. The squalid, filthy dwelling places proved that the foreigners did not appreciate anything better, visitors were told. Miners' housing was on a level with that of Southern slaves, Judge Mellon himself had remarked.'

The war provided a convenient excuse for jailing radicals and agitators as German spies, the Mellon corporations were turned into a vast voting machine, and the family assets rose from 1,690,000,000 dollars in 1920 to 6,091,000,000 dollars in 1928. In

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1929 came the slump, and Mellon's policy as Secretary of the Treasury was blamed with contributing to it. He was exiled as ambassador to the Court of St. James.

Mr. O'Connor's is a very well documented and absorbing book. The career of a singularly uninviting person is presented with sufficient objectivity and without comment. Mellon appears as a bloodless automaton. When America or England has a Communist régime, this life will provide excellent matter for a propagandist film. The capitalist will not require the kind of blackening noticeable in some Soviet films. Brutal and inhuman as some millionaires may appear, excuses may be made. The tyrants of history and the bullies common in every age exercise their cruelty directly upon their victims. But it is possible for the millionaire type to be oblivious and even ignorant of the suffering they cause ; merely obtuse, they need not be particularly cruel. The damage done in the exploitation of labour, in speculation and in swindling is usually remote from its authors. The operation is anonymous and impersonal. As Mr. Allen notes, in dealing with the formation of corporations, ' The general process of concentration made for irresponsibility of management, because again and again the power which men wielded far outreached their personal stake in the enterprises which they controlled.'

Rockefeller was born in 1839, and at the age of eighteen went into partnership as a produce merchant. Thus he secured sufficient capital to start exploiting the inventions of others, and by the age of thirty-nine the entire oil industry of America was in his hands—both the producing and refining sides. Mr. Flynn's account of the discovery of oil in quantity and the struggle to exploit it is the best I have read. (The book is extremely well documented throughout). The details of Rockefeller's success are not of interest at the moment ; the methods were similar to Mellon's—the turning of employees into a voting machine, the use for propaganda of ostensibly disinterested organizations (the press, research laboratories), trusts, secret agreements, diabolically ingenious methods of crushing competitors, and a cynical disregard of all anti-trust and other legislation carried to check the machinations of capitalist monopoly.

According to Mr. Flynn, the blameless hero of (A) compares ill with Rockefeller ; for Carnegie was hard, ruthless, and guilty

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of far more serious breaches of established ethics. Perhaps because Rockefeller at first neglected the art of ballyhoo, he was for a time the object of universal vituperation as the type of capitalist ogre. Later he learned the value of the press and under the direction of Ivy Lee, the headlines and titles of magazine articles changed from ' Rockefeller Indicted Again,' ' Tainted Money,' ' The Church and the Reward of Iniquity ' to ' John D. Gives Dimes to Children,' ' Rockefeller Founder fights Pellagra in Georgia,' 'When I Caddied for John D.' and so on. He founded various charitable trusts which by 1932 had dispersed 750,000,000 dollars ; and as in the case of other benefactors of humanity his concerns were involved in bloody strikes, on the scale almost of civil war.

We are familiar with essays describing the effects of machine technique and economy upon the worker, salesman, etc.—lack of opportunity for initiative, the exclusion of normal human qualities and interests, and so on. The effect upon the executives and captains of industry deserves a chapter towards the writing of which such biographies as these would contribute. We would like to know what kind of person gets to the top, and how fitted they are to control the lives of others. The likenesses between Carnegie and Rockefeller in particular suggest that millionaires run very much to type, the requisites for success being, besides luck, cunning nearly animal, smartness, opportunism, ant-like concentration on immediate ends, insensitiveness, ruthlessness, idealism, sanctioned if possible by one of the narrow forms of protestant religion. Mr. Allen records that ' One of the most striking things about this group of men [the elder Morgan, the Rockefeller brothers, and others] was their piety. At least seven of them were churchgoers ; six were actively interested in church affairs.' (*Cf.* also the section of Mr. Borsodi's book on John D. Rockefeller as the quantity-minded type). They need luck because the raw material of millionaires seems common enoug h; there is nothing very special about them, unless it be the strength of their appetites. There is no ground for supposing that they are especially villainous or even clever—once they have made fortunes they often have no idea what to do with them, and their lives turn out to be as circumscribed almost as those of their workers. We learn from his biographer that Carnegie ' devoted himself with immense concentration to the job of the moment. He was never a hard

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worker in the grindstone sense . . . he was the thinker, the one who supplied ideas, inspiration, and driving power.' (Though Carnegie's laziness was exceptional: he enjoyed ' those extensive leisure periods of his which are so seldom mentioned by the exponents of hard work ').

To Rockefeller is attributed ' relentless, ruthless patience.' ' He refused to enter upon operations where he could not see the project all the way through. But having satisfied his mind and gone in he hesitated at no sacrifice, no cost, no measures, however vast and even cruel, to drive through to his objective.' In Mrs. Millin's *Rhodes* and in various biographies of Ivar Kreuger one finds similar characteristics.

Mr. Flynn has some interesting comments to make upon the relation of business and religion. He disputes the view that the business heads to whom religion has been profitable are always hypocritical about it: ' The business man's religion is not the offspring of his business interests. It is the other way round. His business instincts are the children of his religion. The religious boy is the father of the business man.' The undesirable effects of religion upon business he explains by the devotion of the modern Christian to the Old Testament with its questionable ethics and heroes. Mr. Allen too points out that the Christian religion as practised by such men was only partially the religion of Jesus. ' Other philosophies than that of Christ had absorbed and diluted the Christian teachings. There was the Benjamin Franklin philosophy of frugality. There was the Puritan philosophy of sobriety, continence, and Sabbath observance. There was the *laissez-faire* tradition of business competition as a hard-fought battle without fear or favor.' Thus the business man finds sanction for his practices. Some support for these views is given by Professor Tawney in his *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism.*

Though the ' capitalist spirit ' is, as he says, as old as history, and not the offspring of Puritanism, ' it found in certain aspects of later Puritanism a tonic which braced its energies and fortified its already vigorous temper.' In the eyes of the Puritan moralist, work is ' not merely an economic means, to be laid aside when physical needs have been satisfied. It is a spiritual end, for in it alone can the soul find health, and it must be continued as an ethical duty long after it has ceased to be a material necessity.'

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Millionaires flourish in a world which has substituted acquisition for the saving of one's soul as the end of life.

Apart from a certain priggishness, the young Carnegie seems to have been an estimable character. If he had remained in Scotland, guided by local tradition he might have remained a charming individual and a useful member of society. But he was translated into a country where nothing remained stable, traditions withered, and the acquisitive code prevailed. In America the Norse blood claimed for him by his biographer asserted itself, and the religion he brought with him confirmed him in a course of life which another religion might have led him to criticize. *Corruptio optimi pessima* perhaps. (Incidentally, Lord Beaverbrook, though not by any means a parallel case, is the son of a Scots Presbyterian minister).

To the readers of newspapers millionaires are represented as benefactors and their lives the type on which every boy should model himself. That was very evident on the recent centenary of Carnegie's birth: according to the *Observer*, he will 'live in history as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, example of the successful business man with high ideals and the practical vision to carry them through.' Mellon is known as the Ambassador who received an honorary degree from Cambridge some time ago, Frick as the Steel King who left £10,000,000 worth of art treasures in his home, to be open to the U.S. public for ever. (*Daily Telegraph*).

To the *Times*, before the activities which led to his suicide were published, Kreuger was the courageous victim of circumstances—'No common adventurer . . . may well be regarded as a pioneer ahead of his time . . . Least of all does personal suspicion light upon him in his last day.' But as Professor Tawney observes, however much arrogance and greed there may have been in the past, 'men called these vices by their right names, and had not learned to persuade themselves that greed was enterprise and avarice economy.'

With the aid of statistics about libraries, laboratories, etc., it is possible to erect an imposing façade of benefactions by the rich. But such superficial quantitative measurement has not much meaning. Qualitative contributions to humanity are more important. In religion a George Herbert or a Newman count more than any Mellon—builder of a Presbyterian cathedral in Pittsburgh

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known as ' the Mellon fire-escape.' It is a platitude that money by itself can do nothing however pious the intentions of the will-maker. Carnegie money, the fruit of a lifetime of completely merciless acquisition, is put to widely varying purposes, sometimes laudable: it paid for the distribution in America of the *New Statesman* pamphlet on Abyssinia. Mr. Lloyd George's pension of 10,000 dollars a year from the same source will not perhaps meet with such general approbation. Even when one can agree that millionaire money has been spent to good purpose, there is a great deal to put into the opposite scale. There may be instances of large fortunes having been made without causing or increasing human misery ; more important perhaps is the wastage of life and energy in the futile or anti-social industries, cosmetics or armaments, in which great wealth is commonly amassed.

A second point against such benefactions is made by Mr. Borsodi. ' It is a complete mistake to assume that without philanthropies of the Rockefeller type, the world would have been without the educational, medical and religious institutions and activities which their gifts brought into being. The institutions might not have become such grandiose institutions in point of size, but they might have been permitted a much greater degree of freedom to those who really created and conducted them,' etc. ' The Rockefellers of to-day " give " colleges, hospitals, foundations, just as the mediæval barons used to " give " monasteries, nunneries, chapels, and the Roman senators used to " give " baths and amphi-theatres. But in reality they " give " nothing. They merely return a part of what they were acquisitive and powerful enough to seize. Unfortunately they return these parts of their accumulations in forms and on conditions which lessen if they do not completely destroy their value to the public.' And ' in theory the advantages derived from combination might have been distributed to labor in higher wages or to the general public in the form of lower prices.' In a less anarchistic economy there would not be such large profits to dispose of.

I have chosen these books as sources of information about well-known captains of industry because the stock estimate is so widely accepted and yet so wide of the mark. Though criticism may only aspire to the humble functions of a louse ; it may irritate the animal and perhaps draw attention to its ill-health. Not that

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millionaires themselves are of any great importance or interest. They are mere components in a machine which they do not control; others equally rapacious and equally 'forward looking' would have gravitated upwards if these particular individuals had not appeared. They are not even essential components; technical improvements and inventions are rarely made by millionaires, though exploited by a process in which the capitalist plays a part. The latter indeed is often as not a hindrance to mechanical and scientific advance—one of the usual objections to capitalism being that it hampers new discovery: inventions lie unused because heavy investments are made in older, less efficient methods. Another quotation from *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* is in place: 'Few tricks of the unsophisticated intellect are more curious than the naïve sophistication of the business man, who ascribes his achievements to his own unaided efforts, in bland unconsciousness of a social order without whose continuous support and vigilant protection he would be as a lamb bleating in the desert.' Before crediting too much to the successful promoter one must reckon 'a number of other factors: the spread of population, the growth of cities and the general urbanization of American life, the influx of immigration, the new efficiency of communication, the engineering skill which went into the design of new machinery, the labor of hundreds of thousands of workers: in short, the growth of the country and the advance of the machine age.' (*The Lords of Creation*).

Books of the kind under review do not seem to be written about the English counterparts of the American millionaire. More interest is taken in the type in America, perhaps because steel and railroad kings supply an emotional need catered for elsewhere by royalty. (*Cf. The Psychology of Constitutional Monarchy* in the *New Statesman* for February 1st, 1936). Another reason may be that the English public (used to a feudal order?) does not like its great men inspected. But there is certainly a sufficient number of readers for 'debunking' tracts—witness the sale of such a pamphlet as *The Secret International*. That there is abundant matter for the enquirer is indicated by the occasional showing-up of the smaller capitalist fish—Mr. Williams-Ellis' article in the *Nineteenth Century* for November, 1935, proves that municipal corruption is pervasive, if not normal. Even the English Arms

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Commission reveals enough to show that the methods of the American armament manufacturers are not confined to the U.S., and correspondence in the *New Statesman* after last year's election suggests that the vote-machines of American millionaires are imitated here. Another reason why the candid biography is rare here is the state of the English law of libel, which affords perhaps too much protection. Mr. O'Connor's book is compiled from court records, newspaper files and so on, to which every one has access, but a similar publication here might, one imagines, be suppressed by the threat of legal action. We are left with the productions of bodies like the U.D.C. and the Labour Research Department. To these must be added some recent Communist pamphlets, in which a change of tactics is apparent. The C.P.G.B. has lately brought out the evidence given before the Wrecks Commission, and reprinted Harry Pollitt's evidence before the Arms Commission, thus securing a wider audience for information which cannot be too widely disseminated. They are a welcome contrast to stereotyped essays on the class war, and much more likely to make converts.

Mr. Borsodi's book is appended, because it has some relevant argument about millionaries, and because it is the best book of its kind, now that *Men and Machines* is out of print. Written about the same time, it draws on similar material, but is not as disinterested an enquiry as Mr. Chase's book. Mr. Borsodi's complaint is against the factory system, which destroyed the independence, etc., of the worker, and degraded the quality of the product. He therefore proposes an increased use of machines, but in the home, so that it shall be as self-sufficient as possible. Many readers who cannot accept his attractive reasoning will welcome his criticism of contemporary society.

The Lords of Creation, originally published in America, is now available here. It is a detailed account of the development of monopoly capitalism in the last forty years, largely from the financial point of view. Like the American biographies noticed here it is unemotional, unliterary and heavily reinforced with references ; and like them it provides material from which the reader may draw his own conclusions, rather than ready-made opinions conceived in accordance with a political theory.

DENYS THOMPSON.

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ENGLISH POETRY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE recent shift out of the nineteenth century, with the accompanying changes of critical perspective, has not rehabilitated the eighteenth. Even when we see the strength of the period in Pope, Johnson, Goldsmith and Crabbe instead of in Gray, Collins and Cowper, Dyer and Lady Winchelsea—'romantic precursors,' it is still a period in which something has gone wrong. It still appears unprosperous, and appears so not the less for opening with a great poet who is fertile, varied and influential; Pope as a presiding genius is not so blest as Donne. And especially if we go through the *Oxford Books* for the two centuries in order does it become plain that the poetic tradition developed unluckily; unluckily in the sense that the prevailing modes and conventions of the eighteenth century did not on the whole tend, as those of the seventeenth did, to bring into poetry the vitality of the age.

Mr. Edgell Rickword, reviewing[1] *The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*, sees the bad turn as coming at about 1720, the period 'which no anthological charity can do much to rehabilitate' running from then to 1780. 'The vulgar prejudice against the minor poetry of the eighteenth century,' he reports, 'may be defended so long as it does not attempt to include the period that may properly be called Augustan.' And certainly, wherever we place the turn, the contrast between the two centuries, taken each in the lump, in their showing of minor talent is an extreme one. A tradition that does not enlist, or make good use of, minor talent may be suspected of having also confined major talent to minor performance. This distinction between 'major' and 'minor' incites to questions, of course; but everyone will agree that the seventeenth century is extraordinarily rich in good poetry by writers of distinctively minor gift; on the other hand,

[1]See *Towards Standards of Criticism* (ed. by the present writer), p. 117.

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hardly any taste could find a great deal of major poetry in the period stigmatized by Mr. Rickword.

He illustrates his diagnosis with the following:

> In youth's soft season, when the vacant mind
> To each kind impulse of affection yields,
> When Nature charms, and love of humankind
> With its own brightness every object gilds,
> Should two congenial bosoms haply meet,
> Or on the banks of Camus, hoary stream,
> Or where smooth Isis glides on silver feet,
> Nurse of the Muses each, and each their theme,
> How blith the mutual morning task they ply!

This (it is by William Whitehead and was written about 1760) is a fair specimen, worth study for its representative quality. There is that characteristic effect of incongruity, deriving, fairly obviously, from the co-presence of two distinct and ill-assorted styles: committed ostensibly to the neat and sedate (the ' decent ') elegiac mode of Gray, Whitehead has a strong tendency to mount—he here mounts unmistakably—upon Miltonic stilts:

> Should two congenial bosoms haply meet,
> Or on the banks of Camus, hoary stream,
> Or where smooth Isis glides on silver feet,
> Nurse of the Muses each . . .

Though ill-assorted, the two styles nevertheless attract each other; that, indeed, was implied in the observation that the incongruity is characteristic. In Gray himself, it is relevant to note, there is an element of Milton; and the style of the *Elegy* might be described as itself a blend—a very successful one. Gray's great achievement was to crystallize into distinguished expression the conventional poetizing of the meditative-melancholic line of versifiers who drew their inspiration so largely from the minor poems of Milton; and he may be said to have done so by adapting to his ruminative sentiments and commonplaces an Augustan style.

But when we look at the following, written over thirty years before the *Elegy*, Gray's achievement does not appear altogether new:

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No silver saints, by dying misers giv'n,
Here brib'd the rage of ill-requited heav'n:
But such plain roofs as Piety could raise,
And only vocal with the Maker's praise.
In these lone walls (their days eternal bound)
These moss-grown domes with spiry turrets crown'd,
Where awful arches make a noon-day night,
And the dim windows shed a solemn light . . .

That, in style and sensibility, is very close to Gray's quatrains. *Eloïsa to Abelard*, from which it comes, opens:

In these deep solitudes and awful cells,
Where heav'nly-pensive contemplation dwells,
And ever-musing melancholy reigns . . .

—In associating the Augustan Pope with the minor Milton Gray was anticipated by Pope. That, of course, is an over-simplified way of putting things, though it serves to make a valid point. Here is another passage of *Eloïsa to Abelard*.

The darksome pines that o'er yon rocks reclin'd
Wave high, and murmur to the hollow wind,
The wand'ring streams that shine between the hills,
The grots that echo to the tinkling rills,
The dying gales that pant upon the trees,
The lakes that quiver to the curling breeze;
No more these scenes my meditation aid,
Or lull to rest the visionary maid.
But o'er the twilight groves and dusky caves,
Long-sounding aisles, and intermingled graves,
Black melancholy sits, and round her throws
A death-like silence, and a dead repose;
Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
Shades ev'ry flower, and darkens ev'ry green,
Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
And breathes a browner horror on the woods.

—There it is discernibly the Pope of the Pastorals—

The dying gales that pant upon the trees,
The lakes that quiver to the curling breeze

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—who lends himself so easily to the eighteenth century meditative-melancholic. But that is not all ; the sensibility of the passage clearly has close affinities with the taste that later found Miltonic blank-verse sympathetic—the taste represented by the landscape mode of Thomson.

What this reference to Pope brings out is that in the sensibility of the eighteenth century the various Miltonic strains—blank-verse and those derivative from the minor poems—are closely related to one another, and at the same time, as Gray's *Elegy* is overtly, are implicitly related to Augustan taste. Thomson's declamatory Miltonics, for example, depart consciously from Augustan technique and idiom, but, departing consciously, they never forget: their bardic nobility pays involuntary homage to the neatness and prose propriety they offer a holiday from. (The lines from *Eloïsa to Abelard*, it had better perhaps be said, were not adduced as demonstrating—demonstration is hardly necessary—anything, but as providing an effective way of pointing).

How was it that this by-line from Pope came to count for so much in the century? In the *Oxford Book* of the period it looks like the central line. But when we think of Johnson and Crabbe, when we recall any example of a poetry bearing a serious relation to the life of its time, then Gray, Thomson, Dyer, Akenside, Shenstone and the rest belong plainly to a by-line. It is literary and conventional in the worst senses of those terms. It keeps its monotonous tenour along the cool sequestered vale of Polite Letters. ' Sequestered,' significantly, is among the words one finds oneself underlining most frequently in going through the *Oxford Book* ; it vies with ' mouldered ' (or ' mouldering '), ' contemplation,' ' pensive,' and ' votary ' (the poetic world is something for special cultivation—apart and solemn, belonging, as it were, to a sabbatic cult).

From the general censure of this account Gray's *Elegy* claims exemption. Its success, one is tempted to say, is a triumph not so much of creative talent as of taste ; what makes the *Elegy* more than literary in the pejorative sense of the word is unusually fine and sure literary tact. Gray's positive feeling for the Augustan is apparent in his style, and the presence of the Augustan in his style is the presence of a strength the nature of which may be suggested by recalling a familiar tag:

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The proper study of Mankind is Man.

The positive Augustan in him enables Gray to achieve a strong conventionality ; his churchyard meditations have, as it were, social substance ; his commonplaces are weighted by the idiom of a literary culture that laid peculiar stress on the normally and centrally human as manifested on the common sense social surface of life. It is significant that Johnson exempted the *Elegy* from his general disparagement of Gray's verse ; the significance is explicit enough in the terms of his commendation :

> ' The *Churchyard* abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo. The four stanzas beginning *Yet even these bones*, are to me original : I have never seen the notions in any other place ; yet he that reads them here, persuades himself that he has always felt them.'

It is significant too that where, as happens, a certain instability betrays itself in Gray's meditative-Augustan he moves, not towards Whitehead's Miltonic-stilted, but towards the high Johnsonian decorum (though Gray, of course, can achieve nothing approaching the Johnsonian weight and propriety) :

> But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
> Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll :
> Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
> And froze the genial current of the Soul.

The other classic of the line is the *Ode to Evening*. That too seems more fitly called a success of taste, of literary sense, than of creative talent. Collins had little positive feeling for the Augustan strength ; on the other hand, he had nothing positive of any kind strong enough to emancipate him. His work as a whole is, like the shrine of Liberty,—

> In Gothick Pride it seems to rise ;
> Yet Graecia's graceful Orders join
> Majestic thro' the mix'd Design

—a monument of the uncertainty and debility of taste fostered by the tradition. Outside the *Ode to Evening* his thin velleity of

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a personal sensibility appears most happy in the conventional strain of pretty elegiac sentiment that Pope brought into his *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*[1] and that Gray was trying for his *Elegy*[2] at much the same time as Collins (who has other warblings in the same strain) was composing *How Sleep the Brave*. The inspiring and emancipating genius in the *Ode to Evening* is the minor Milton, responded to with unique freshness of personal feeling—feeling that finds *Lycidas*[3] even more sympathetic than *Il Penseroso*. That last clause indicates Collins's peculiar distinction: the Ode is very much of its period, being closely related to (let us say) Gray's *Elegy* and Dyer's *Grongar Hill*; but in celebrating 'The Pensive Pleasures sweet' it achieves a remarkable freedom from the Augustan—from the suggestions, in its idiom and movement, of social deportment and polite civilization. It may be said to express with unique purity something that is, as contradistinguished from Augustan, distinctively eighteenth century.

The favourite Muse of Collins's invocation is, it is worth noting, Fancy. Fancy, in *The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*, is the Muse commonly invoked where the implicit acknowledgment is to Milton. It is a related observation that the cult of Spenser in the period associates with the Miltonic habit.

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[1] What tho' no sacred earth allow thee room,
Nor hallow'd dirge be mutter'd o'er thy tomb?
Yet shall thy grave with rising flowe'rs be drest,
And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast:
There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,
There the first roses of the year shall blow;
While Angels with their silver wings o'ershade
The ground, now sacred by thy reliques made.

[2] See the cancelled stanza of the *Elegy*:

There scatter'd oft, the earliest of the Year,
By Hands unseen, are show'rs of Violets found;
The Red-breast loves to build and warble there,
And little Footsteps lightly print the Ground.

[3] The Ode contains a number of significant reminiscences of *Lycidas*, for the most part obviously unconscious.

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As for the line of descriptive blank-verse, it does indeed, as the piece of Akenside that Professor Nichol Smith quotes in the Preface to his *Oxford Book* brings home, lead on to Wordsworth. But a Wordsworth who was merely Akenside would be merely dull. The point of Professor Nichol Smith's observation should be, not that Akenside anticipates Wordsworth, but that Wordsworth, with an essential life of a very different order, has a certain eighteenth century strength: it is not any 'romantic' spirit in Akenside that links him to Wordsworth, but the common sense ethos and social habit implicit in that meditative verse—verse that, as Professor Nichol Smith points out, looks so like Wordsworth's. That verse represents none the less a dull eighteenth century by-line, one 'literary' in the bad sense.

It has still to be discussed why this by-line—by-line in regard to the life of the age and to its strongest poetry—should have come to count for so much; for so much as to appear, in *The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*, the main tradition. To distinguish between a strong line and a weak to which it became subordinated, or between a satisfactory Augustan phase and a disappointing successor (which one is tempted to call Georgian—there are analogies with the 'Georgian' of the twentieth century) is not enough; it would seem that the strong line had its weakness, and that the Augustan phase was not in every way satisfactory. And what is there we can point to in the high Augustan period—in, let us say, the age of Pope—to justify the belief that it was a flourishing period of English poetry? There is Pope himself, a great poet and representative enough to make the period remarkable, though his greatness is not purely Augustan. But apart from Pope? Gay, Parnell, Swift, Prior? The first two are representative period figures, of very minor interest; that their names should stand out in the accepted Augustan constellation suggests a certain dearth of the truly remarkable in their time.

Swift's verse, which there is perhaps a fashionable tendency to overrate to-day, does indeed deserve attention; but he cannot be made out to be a great poet or anything approaching it. Though very individual, he has still a representative quality: lacking the Augustan politeness, he seems, with his dry force of presentment, both to make the Augustan positives—

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That merit should be chiefly placed
In judgment, knowledge, wit and taste[1]

—look like negatives, and to give the characteristic Augustan lacks and disabilities a positive presence. In the absence of the superficial Augustan urbanity the Augustan assurance lies exposed as a spiritual poverty, its hollowness brought out by Swift's very force. If it be urged that Swift's verse comes for the most part under the head of light verse,[2] that may be granted without in the least detracting from the account just given of its serious significance.

Perhaps the appropriateness of describing Prior's verse as light, and certainly the justice of taking him as the index of the death of a tradition, is more obvious. He has none of Swift's force of originality, and if he is out of touch with the tradition of urbane wit and grace running from Jonson through Carew to Marvell, that must be because the tradition is dead. And he is utterly out of touch with that tradition, though if Prior is not in the line of succession to those poets no lyric versifier in his time is. They were poets whose light verse could be at the same time

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[1]*Cadenus and Vanessa.*

[2]*Cadenus and Vanessa* alone seems to have any touch of the seventeenth century grace— though hardly any quotable instance can be found beyond the opening:

The shepherds and the nymphs were seen
Pleading before the Cyprian queen.
The counsel for the fair began
Accusing the false creature Man.

—That movement has the same ancestry as the following touch (which resembles much to be found in Pope) of seventeenth century wit:

When miss delights in her spinet,
A fiddler may a fortune get;
A blockhead, with melodious voice,
In boarding-schools may have his choice:
And oft the dancing-master's art
Climbs from the toe to touch the heart.

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distinguished poetry ; Marvell's *Picture of Little T.C. in a Prospect of Flowers*, for example, is essentially a more serious thing than Collins's *How Sleep the Brave*. But Prior is in the line that runs through Cowper to Thackeray, Praed and *Punch*. The point may be enforced with the observation that Prior takes happily to those anapæstic, rocking-horse rhythms which we encounter so frequently in *The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*, and which Cowper can apply to completely solemn purposes. It is not merely that sensibility has changed ; senses and faculties have been lost, a perceptive and responsive organization has ceased to function, a capacity for fineness has disappeared (Pope, of course, constitutes an exception—he is a genius, both belonging to his time and transcending it).

The decisive turn in the poetic tradition had, then, occurred before Pope. If, questioning this reference to Prior as an index, someone should urge that Prior, after all, pretends to write nothing more than a kind of society verse, it might be answered that his contemporaries thought of poetry in general as of something that ought to be social in a sense immediately related to this use of ' society '—as belonging to the province of manners. The concept of correctness (a correctness that is ' easy ' and ' natural ') associated with Mr. Waller's reform of our numbers is inseparable from a concept of ' Good Form.' What the turn registers is a change in civilizaton—a change by which, in the view of the age itself, civilization was virtually inaugurated. As a result of the social and economic changes speeded up by the Civil War, a metropolitan fashionable Society, compact and politically in the ascendant, found itself in charge of standards, and extremely convinced that, in the things it cared about, there were standards to be observed, models to be followed: it was anxious to be civilized on the best models. It differed from any conceivable modern fashionable society in being seriously interested in intellectual and literary fashions. Its leaders patronized the Royal Society as well as polite letters and the theatre. If we say that the age was one in which the code of Good Form was in intimate touch with the most serious cultural code we indicate limitations and strength at the same time. The development of sensibility represented by the new ideal of poetic refinement illustrates the point: the ease, elegance and regularity favoured belong, we feel, to

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the realm of manners ; the diction, gesture, and deportment of the verse observe a polite social code ; and the address is, as has been said already,[1] to the ' outer ear '—to an attention that expects to dwell upon the social surface.

And, though strong in its conviction of identity with a crest of civilization, Restoration polite culture was superficial in a very damaging sense of the word and in a very obvious way: it had no serious relations with the moral bases of society. The Restoration had resulted in a hiatus, a discontinuity—one too anomalous to persist. *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* show us the readjustment. But though to the Augustan Gentleman—the new standard—' vice is thoroughly contemptible,' his virtue must ' sit easy about him ' ; if he goes to Heaven (and he must, ' without unseasonable passions,' aim at it), he must go ' with a very good mien.'[2] And the standard is applied with extraordinary consistency and thoroughness. When Addison says, ' a Philosopher, which is what I mean by a Gentleman,' he means it. The fruition of life is to be a Gentleman, and no activity is worth pursuing that cannot be exhibited as belonging to that fruition (hence the scorn of the ' virtuoso ' and the specialist of any kind).[3] The test, the criterion, the significance lies always in the overt social world—the world of common sense, and at the level of polite unspecialized intercourse. The Reason, Truth and Nature of Augustan invocation have corresponding values.

In the Augustan poet, then, the development associated with Waller's name fulfils itself and exposes its full significance. Yet, as the fourth book of *The Dunciad* along with a great deal else of Pope shows, the Augustan poet, using an idiom and forms that insist so on the authoritative reality of the social surface, is not necessarily confined to that surface. Though the polite modes do certainly tend to encourage a complacent superficiality, we may well hesitate to call Augustan civilization superficial. The ' correct ' at the level of manners has relations with something profound and morally serious: the Augustan concern to be civilized is a concern

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[1]See ' English poetry in the Seventeenth Century,' *Scrutiny*, December, 1935.

[2]See *The Tatler*, No. 5.

[3]*cf.* Swift's Academy of Lagado in the *Voyage to Laputa*.

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for human centrality. But all the same, working in the fashionable idiom and conventions, a poet, to achieve the profound in poetry, would have to be great indeed ; and Pope's greatness, we remind ourselves, is of such a kind as to enable him to transcend his age: his profound poetry has in it an essential element of the Metaphysical (and no other poet of Pope's century so communicates with the seventeenth). The representative Augustan poems are rather *The Rape of the Lock*, the *Essay on Man* and the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, and these too it took a Pope to write: they stand far above anything by any contemporary of his. In Pope alone, in his time, the tradition he represents may be said to bring into poetry the full vitality of the age.

For his later contemporaries and their successors the situation had changed for the worse. In the Augustan hey-day there was an extraordinary positiveness, an extraordinary effect of concentration. It was as if all the forces of English life really were focussed in that polite culture—in the ' circumference of wit ' ;[1] as if the polite code had a right to its pretensions, anything that was not in resonance with the idiom being negligible. The appearance of all-sufficiency could not, of course, last ; the rays began to spread, the unrecognized or slighted asserted itself, a great deal not essentially polite in English civilization began to insist on its importance. But there was nothing in the nature of a revolution, a reversal or a jolt—no impulsion adequate to the creating of a new idiom and new forms such as might replace, or seriously challenge, the Augustan. The continued prepotence in these circumstances of the Augustan tradition (strong in the achievement and prestige of its great representative) could hardly be expected to favour the production of much distinguished verse: even when that tradition had seemed to be one with all that was vital in the age its modes and conventions had not favoured any very interesting use of minor talents. It now decidedly tended towards a merely ' literary ' superficiality. And since unconvinced and undistinguished verse in Augustan modes—verse offering the virtues of polite civilization—is pretty obviously uninteresting, minor talents took largely to the meditative-Miltonizing poetical modes discussed above. The tradition that associated poetry with the central

[1]See *The Tatler*, No. 31.

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interests of the civilized mind having (for them) failed, they naturally sought poetry in the poetical—in specialized (and conventional) sentiments and attitudes representing, as it were, a solemn holiday or Sabbath from the everyday serious.

A poet of the later century would, to write successfully in the Augustan tradition, have to have a very strong positive sympathy with it—a sympathy with it as something more than a literary tradition. He would have to be both like enough Pope, and, civilization having altered, unlike enough—strongly enough unlike to effect decided positive alterations in that very positive idiom. These qualifications Johnson had. His Augustanism, compared with Pope's, is in a sense (a wholly undepreciatory sense) more literary—more a feeling for a literary order, and less a feeling for any social order that pressed immediately upon him. He was, with a specialist spirit—an explicitness and a conscious dignity—impossible in a poet of Pope's time, a professional writer and a scholar. Inhabiting as a writer the study, the library, or the garret

> (There mark what ills the scholar's life assail),

and living as much in an ideal world of letters as in the actual society of his friends and associates, he transmitted no pressure of Good Form, no polite social code, through his pen. His sense of form was a sense of a traditional morality of his craft, enjoining an artistic and intellectual discipline. If we call it a literary sense, 'literary' must be allowed to convey no suggestion of 'superficial'; it was inseparable from a profound moral sense in the ordinary meaning of 'morality':

> Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes,
> And pause awhile from letters, to be wise.

Both the professional and the moralist are felt in the characteristic weight that makes his verse so unmistakable for Pope's.

This weight is partly a matter of the declamatory deliberation of tone—the tone of formal public utterance; Johnson writing does not feel within close range a polite, conversing society. But his warrant for public utterance is a deep moral seriousness, a weight—a human centrality—of theme. It is a generalizing weight:

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> Should Reason guide thee with her brightest ray,
> And pour on misty Doubt resistless day ;
> Should no false Kindness lure to loose delight,
> Nor Praise relax, nor Difficulty fright ;
> Should tempting Novelty thy cell refrain,
> And Sloth effuse her opiate fumes in vain ;
> Should Beauty blunt on fops her fatal dart,
> Nor claim the triumph of a letter'd heart ;
> Should no Disease thy torpid veins invade,
> Nor Melancholy's phantoms haunt thy shade ;
> Yet hope not life from grief or danger free,
> Nor think the doom of man revers'd for thee.

That last line intimates very well what lies behind that effect of concrete force which makes Johnson's abstractions so different from the common run of poetical abstractions in the period. They represent, not absence of pressure, but concentration ; it is as if Johnson were bringing to bear on his verse an irresistible weight of experience—of representative human experience: it is his greatness that he can justify the pretension implicit in the phrase, 'the doom of man,' and invest his generalities with substance. To suggest, of course, that the generalizing process is merely or mainly a matter of using abstractions will not do—as, indeed, the passage just quoted illustrates.

> From ev'ry room descends the painted face,
> That hung the bright Palladium of the place,
> . . . . . .
> The form distorted justifies the fall,
> And detestation rids th' indignant wall.

—that again illustrates the process, and, notably in the last line, the wit that constantly informs declamatory weight. Not that it is always as plainly 'wit' to modern perception ; wit in general as Johnson exhibits it might be defined as a conscious neatness and precision of statement tending towards epigram. It means a constant presence of critical intelligence and makes Johnson's most solemn moralizing quite unlike anything of the next century.

Wit is equally present in his fine stanzas *On the Death of Mr. Robert Levett*:

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When fainting nature call'd for aid,
And hovering death prepar'd the blow,
His vigorous remedy display'd
The power of art without the show.

. . . . . .

No summons mock'd by chill delay,
No petty gain disdain'd by pride,
The modest wants of every day
The toil of every day supplied.

. . . . . .

Then with no fiery throbbing pain,
No cold gradations of decay,
Death broke at once the vital chain
And freed his soul the nearest way.

The personal accent here is Johnson's, but the mode is of the period. Cowper's *The Castaway*, for instance, both in its declamatory decorum and its precise and patterned rationality of statement plainly has close affinities with Johnson's poem:

Obscurest night involv'd the sky,
Th' Atlantic billows roar'd,
When such a destin'd wretch as I,
Wash'd headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

. . . . . .

Nor, cruel as it seem'd could he
Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight, in such a sea,
Alone could rescue them ;
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

But in *The Castaway*, though it is a very fine poem, the mode, we feel, does not so completely fit the purpose—it is susceptible to caricature by unsympathetic rendering as in Johnson it is not. It is not merely that Cowper's stanza, suggesting as it does a hymn-tune lends itself less happily to the mode than Johnson's. It is rather that there seems to be some discrepancy between Cowper's

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emotion and the prose rationality and critical balance of the statement. Indeed we might adapt to Cowper what Mr. Eliot says of Goldsmith—'his melting sentiment just held in check by the precision of his language.' But what Cowper has to express is not melting sentiment, and, on the other hand, in reading Goldsmith we have no sense of insecurity or discrepancy. Goldsmith's sentiment is conventional; that is, socially endorsed. It comes readily to terms with his strong positive feeling for the Augustan literary tradition: he can with perfect fitness observe a civic decorum and 'inform his verse with prose virtues.'

This reference to prose—it is from Mr. Eliot—is worth examining. In his extremely valuable Introductory Essay[1] to Johnson's Satires, remarking that the eighteenth century English verse is 'intolerably poetic,' he says:

> 'Instead of working out the proper form for its matter, when it has any, and informing verse with prose virtues, it merely applies the magniloquence of Milton or the neatness of Pope to matter which is wholly unprepared for it; so that what the writers have to say always appears surprised at the way in which they choose to say it.'

That is admirably put. But if we imply, as Mr. Eliot does, that the proper form for any and every poet's matter will exhibit 'prose virtues' we surely impair the value for the understanding of the eighteenth century of this reference to prose. Mr. Eliot lays down an explicit principle:

> 'And to have the virtues of good prose is the first and minimum requirement of good poetry.'

But in what sense of 'prose' can *Ash Wednesday*, consummate poetry in which the poet has notably worked out the proper form for his matter, be said to have the virtues of good prose? The first thing to be said to anyone who finds *Ash Wednesday* difficult of approach is that, though the poem contains what appear to be statements, it must not be read as if it offered anything like prose structure or prose meaning: its structure can be taken only if (as

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[1]Reprinted in *English Critical Essays, XXth Century* (World's Classics).

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the sparse punctuation intimates) we suspend the expectations regarding order and connectedness that we bring from prose. And, in the eighteenth century, Blake's *Hear the voice of the Bard* has a structure very much like that of *Ash Wednesday*. It was in noting the uncharacteristic qualities of one of Blake's early poems that Mr. Eliot, in *The Sacred Wood*,[1] said, with justice and point, ' it is in a language that has undergone the discipline of prose ': *To the Muses* was written before Blake had worked out his proper form—before he had fairly discovered his proper matter.

The point of bringing Blake in here should be fairly plain: he represents the antithesis to the Augustan ethos (to which Mr. Eliot the poet is no nearer). The proper form for the matter of poets in the Augustan tradition may fairly be said to have the virtues of good prose. In that tradition the poet inhabited, not

The place of solitude where three dreams cross,

but (even when solitary) the social world—the world of common sense waking consciousness. His matter, even when contemplated privately, and with strong personal feelings, always found it natural to acknowledge the jurisdiction of Reason. Each word in his verse knows how it got there, and can give a neat and satisfactory account of its presence ; we talk of ' propriety ' and ' precision '—' conscious neatness and precision of statement.' Even the formal pattern of the verse, suggesting as it does a critical sobriety and a steady deference to rational order, might be said to express a prose attitude of mind: it certainly has a great deal to do with the effect of prose voice making prose statements.

Such a mode reflects an age, a culture, in which, for distinguished minds, the outward forms and conventions of civilization were satisfactory and important, and what seemed most significant in individual experience was not discrepant with the claim of the common sense world to be the pre-eminently and authoritatively real. The suggestion of imperfect congruity between the matter and manner in *The Castaway* expresses no general quarrel in Cowper with the implications of the form and idiom. His religious mania was a thing apart, irreconcilable with the rest of experience ; in the world of verse-writing, table-talk and

[1]See the essay on Blake, reprinted in *Selected Essays*.

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living he was eighteenth century, if not Augustan: even if he cannot altogether justify a formal public decorum and the accent of 'wit,' the 'proper form' for his matter may nevertheless be described as having the prose virtues. But for Blake the conventional order had no interest, and conventional expression falsified or ignored what individual experience told him was the real, the true and the significant: his genius was that he saw no choice but to work out a completely and uncompromisingly individual idiom and technique.

No great artist, of course, can be merely individual, or completely out of relation with his time. Blake did not reject the English language; and the impulsion in him towards his triumphant originality was associated with something stirring at large among his contemporaries. Nevertheless, he was individual, original and isolated enough to be without influence. The work that should alter the situation for creative talent in general had yet to be done. The Augustan tradition was not yet disposed of; in fact, some of the finest verse belonging to it was, when *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* had come out, still unwritten.

It is unfortunate that Crabbe should be left to students of literature, and that he should in the student's memoranda be represented mainly by the titles of early works. *The Village*, we know, is to be compared (or contrasted) with Goldsmith's poem, and *The Borough* and *The Parish Register* illustrate the growing interest in realism and the poor. Of the later work we know that we may find in it traces of Romantic influence. Actually, is is in the later work, the Tales of the various collections, that he is (or ought to be—for who reads him?) a living classic, because it is in this work that he develops to the full his peculiarly eighteenth century strength. His strength is that of a novelist and of an eighteenth century poet who is positively in sympathy with the Augustan tradition, and it is one strength. The Augustan form, as he adapts it, is perfectly suited to his matter and to his outlook—matter and outlook that have close affinities with Jane Austen's, though he has a range and a generous masculine strength that bring out by contrast her spinsterly limitations (we remember D. H. Lawrence's excessively unsympathetic allusions to her).

Not that Crabbe produced any work of art of the order of her novels: his art is that of the short-story writer, and of this

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he is a master. To this art the verse-form, favouring concentration and point, lends itself peculiarly well. 'Pope in worsted stockings' is a description that is far from having the felicity commonly attributed to it, and the parody in *Rejected Addresses* conveys a false impression. Crabbe handles the couplet in his own way, adapting it to an admirable use of dialogue:

> 'I must be loved,' said Sybil; 'I must see
> The man in terrors who aspires to me;
> At my forbidding frown, his heart must ache,
> His tongue must falter, and his frame must shake:
> And if I grant him at my feet to kneel,
> What trembling, fearful pleasure must he feel;
> Nay, such the raptures that my smiles inspire,
> That reason's self must for a time retire.'
> 'Alas! for good Josiah,' said the dame,
> 'These wicked thoughts would fill his soul with shame;
> He kneel and tremble at a thing of dust!
> He cannot, child:'—the child replied, 'He must.'

That is not clumsy or provincial Pope, nor does the Augustan form represent an awkward elegance clothing an incongruous matter. It represents, one might say, 'reason's self,' a 'reason' the authority of which Crabbe's matter recognizes as naturally as Sybil recognizes it in the passage quoted. And the last line illustrates the kind of point to which 'wit' in Crabbe so appropriately runs. But since the unit of his art is truly the tale, the art cannot be fairly represented by quotations. It is with assertion that he must be left: the assertion, easily tested—see for example *The Lover's Journey*, that in the use of description (of nature and the environment generally) for emotional purposes he surpasses any Romantic.

Crabbe, however, was hardly at the fine point of consciousness in his time. His sensibility belongs to an order that those who were most alive to the age—who had the most sensitive antennæ—had ceased to find sympathetic. For them the work of Wordsworth and Coleridge provided the impulse and showed the way to congenial idioms and forms. Of the representative poets of the Regency period, Byron had strong conscious sympathies with the Augustan tradition; but though he succeeded in writing satiric

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poetry, it was not in any Augustan mode. *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* reveals his complete incapacity to use the traditional couplet. Nothing of what was behind the form for Dryden, for Pope, for Johnson and for Crabbe was there for him. When he achieves his own satiric form and manner they are of a kind to exempt him from all the Augustan virtues: decorum, order, elegance, consistency. He can in *The Vision of Judgment* strike and sustain for a moment a romantic attitude of aristocratic dignity; but the essential notes of his satire are recklessness, impudence and irreverence. Though so great an admirer of Dryden and Pope he is, even as a satirist, outside society—a rebel; and in this he is representative of the age in which Crabbe is a survival.

F. R. LEAVIS.

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PSYCHOLOGY AND CRITICISM

IN spite of the fact that no less an authority than Dr. C. G. Jung has categorically declared that ' the personal life of the poet cannot be held essential to his art,'[1] in other words, that no amount of theorizing about the private history of the artist can properly influence our judgment of the merit of his art, criticism to-day is becoming more and more pre-occupied with examining precisely those personal aspects of the man's life in the hope of arriving at a juster and more accurate estimation of his work. True, Dr. Jung has unfortunately, notwithstanding some acute *obiter dicta* regarding the relation of the artist to his work and the whole process of literary creation, based this very proper conclusion on the wrong reasons. For in an interesting paper entitled ' Psychology and Literature '[2] he makes much of what he calls the Collective Unconscious as a sort of fount of inspiration and a mysterious storehouse for poetic material. He supposes that ' the secret of artistic creation and of the effectiveness of art is to be found in a return to the state of *participation mystique*—to that level of experience at which it is man who lives and not the individual, and at which the weal or woe of the single human being does not count, but only human existence.'[3] For this reason, he says, art is objective and impersonal and capable of moving us all.

Without on this occasion going into the evidence for, or the plausibility of, the Collective Unconscious, we should remark that, so far as imaginative literature is concerned at any rate, this hypothesis is irrelevant. It is irrelevant because, as it happens, the individual decidedly does count, and because no theory of human life which ignores the purpose and the end of the single human being or the problems of the nature of Reality, is worth a second thought. We are here confronted with a fundamental

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[1] *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, p. 199.
[2] Op. cit., p. 175.
[3] *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, p. 198.

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weakness in modern psychological inquiry ; for it assumes that, when you have convicted a person of this or that trait, complex, infantilism or whatever it be in his psyche, you are at the same time in possession of the key to an explanation of his spiritual activity, in the case I am discussing, of his literary work. This argument pushed to its logical conclusion would cheerfully place all human beings, even the apparently ' normal,' at the mercy of a psychological determinism, the precise structure and extent of which they can rarely if ever be fully aware of. For the unconscious, all psychologists agree, is the bedrock of the personality, and the motives in this determinism lie safely buried there. As the late Georg Groddeck put it, ' these internal causes are not known to the conscious mind but are locked up in the inaccessible depths of the It.'[1] So that, even if the exceptional person by dint of the most elaborate and careful introspection manages to catch a glimpse of them, he is as a rule, and particularly if he has any marked neurotic tendencies, powerless to do anything about it, unless indeed he resorts to the services of the psychiatrist. No doubt such a view of human nature is extraordinarily flattering to the practitioner of psycho-therapeutic medicine, and so long as it serves the purpose of this particular science, which seeks to cure people of illnesses betrayed in specific symptoms, there is no need to quarrel with it. But when on the basis of analytical psychology its exponents and apologists construct a theory of life that in fact denies the meta-physical problem, the attempt can only result in a disastrous philosophical anarchy. I am therefore here concerned to show why literary criticism, by which I understand philosophical criticism, must guard itself against being influenced by psycho-analytical revelations (even supposing them to be true) concerning the personality of the artist.

Some years ago Mr. Montgomery Belgion settled it entirely to his own satisfaction that the imaginative writer could be said to have only two functions, viz. : to provide pleasure, and under cover of doing this, to be an irresponsible propagandist.[2] And the thing that the imaginative writer propagates, that he insinuates into the simple reader's mind without the latter's suspecting it, is

[1] *The World of Man*, p. 82.
[2] *Our Present Philosophy of Life.*

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nothing less than a philosophy of life. The critic's duty, therefore, is to be sharply on the look-out for this philosophy of life that is thus being surreptitiously scattered abroad, to drag it forth into the clear light of day when he has found it, and to inspect it narrowly with reference to a pre-conceived standard of values. And if it can be convicted of any unsoundness, then the artist must be ruthlessly hauled over the coals and the public duly warned. To be sure, at the conclusion of this task, which all his readers will agree Mr. Belgion performs most wittily and with telling effect, nobody would have the least suspicion, unless expressly told so, that it was a work of art that had been operated on and not, say, a political pamphlet or an academic treatise. And it has never been very clear whether Mr. Belgion himself cares very much in what category it belongs, so long as he can seize upon the implicit philosophy and show it up for what it is, or isn't.

It would not take very long, I think, to show that Mr. Belgion's attitude towards art is a somewhat lopsided one. Yet this matter of the artist's philosophy of life is important, even though you cannot quite simply extract it like a bad tooth from the body of a work of art. The philosophy implied in the work of a serious artist cannot be ignored, if only for the reason that, and here we may safely accept a dogma of this distinguished critic, a philosophy of life dictates moral purpose. And moral purpose, it should be added, is intimately related to the doctrine of final causes. If then we accept this dogma and at the same time bear in mind Longinus' old but incontravertible principle that a literary decline is always due to a deep-seated moral cause, we are bound to admit that the teleological element should never be lost sight of in the criticism of imaginative literature.

The psychologist will have it, on the other hand, that the true reason for the artist's irresponsibility in the propagation of his philosophy hinges upon his inevitable unawareness of the forces operating in his own psyche. Rationally he will know what he is driving at, but he can have no inkling why emotionally he wants to move in one direction rather than in another, or what it is in his psyche that compels him to behave in the way he does. He cannot know it, for this compulsion is hidden deep in his unconscious, which must remain *sui generis* an impenetrable territory to him. It is this secret unconscious motive

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that determines his thought and his feeling when he is at work and in all the actions of daily life. And according to this argument the psychological critic is forced to maintain that the artist is not morally responsible in his work, and that he is, as it were, helpless in the assumption of his attitude.[1] For it should be remembered that psychology is no longer confined to the study of the cognitive-affective-conative process as it was in its academic days.[2] It is held that the emotions play an important determining part in the life and health of the psyche. An intellectual attitude, whether acquired by persuasion or resolution, is no use unless backed by intense emotional conviction. In the case of a neurotic, emotional conviction invariably runs counter to reason and volition. He is therefore constantly at war with himself, and this internal conflict, however obscurely, influences the nature of all his beliefs. He may partially succeed in forcing himself into the channels of behaviour which he has persuaded himself are the right ones, but if so, his attitudes and beliefs will most probably be coloured by a certain artificiality, if indeed they are not patently false. In any case such effort is bound to sap a great part of his energy.

If this theory were to be accepted as a principle of literary criticism, it would be difficult to avoid the conclusion that the estimate of a writer's work may be seriously qualified if it can be proved that that writer's modes of feeling and expression were determined by a mysterious conflict in his unconscious, that neurotic tendencies played fast and loose with his psyche, these being inevitably beyond his control. We would be inclined, for instance, now that it has been shown that Henry James had a castration complex, that Baudelaire was in love with his mother,

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[1]*cf.* ' Over against the It there stands the ego, the I, which I take to be merely the tool of the It.' *The World of Man*, p. 77 G. Groddeck).

[2]Even so the essentially purposive character of mental process was insisted on. *cf.* W. McDougall: Psychology. In the definition of mental process as Cognition-Affection-Conation, the middle term must be taken to mean ' feeling ' in the narrower sense. It does not cover the emotional drive and content of the unconscious as postulated in the new psychology.

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that there are unmistakable homosexual traits in Gerard Hopkins, that Lawrence was a neurotic practically from his cradle, and so on, to take a somewhat different view of their productions than we did before. We are made to feel that we know them a good deal better since we have got to the bottom of their troubles, and consequently we are able to see their works in a new and altogether clearer perspective.

Considering the formidable mass of evidence that has been collected since in the middle of the 90's J. Breuer and S. Freud first published their treatise on hysteria and sexuality, few people, I take it, except those invincibly prejudiced, would presume to deny that the psychologist has given a plausible account of many strange aspects of our psychic processes. Moreover he has enabled us to accept facts about ourselves that were hitherto forever threatening to upset the fitness of things and to disturb the very order of the universe. And that there is still much to be learnt from these explorations, most people would, I think, be prepared to agree. But psychology cannot help treading on the heels of philosophy, and every fresh advance in the new science is bound to have repercussions. We all nowadays pay lip-service to a Religio Medici that would make Sir Thomas Browne turn in his grave, and the man who propagates a popular philosophy of life is not the imaginative writer, but the doctor.

Before I now turn to my chief contention, it is necessary to refer the reader to some of the claims made on behalf of psychology and its achievements actual and potential, by its apologists. The fact that the motto *mens sana in corpore sano* could suitably express its fundamental principle does not speak overmuch, it might be thought, for the originality of modern psycho-therapeutic practice. But there is nevertheless one new and fascinating characteristic to be noticed about it, which separates the psychiatrist from the barber-surgeon of former days, not only in time, but in kind, viz.: that in order to restore you to health he will presume to tell you, indeed he must tell you more or less exactly, *what life should mean to you*. The doctor then cannot help but entertain notions about the purpose of life, and therefore about the nature and destiny of Man. He has, however, no qualms at all about the role he must assume. ' A psycho-neurosis must be understood as the suffering of a human being who has not discovered what

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life means for him.'[1] But whereas Dr. Jung shows himself very much alive to the difficulties of the task, Dr. Adler is breezily confident. For him ' the neurotic soul is the result of treating the rest of humanity as though its life and aims were altogether of less importance than one's own, and thus losing interest in any larger life. Paradoxically it often happens that a neurotic has very large schemes of saving himself and others.'[2] And he has no hesitation in laying it down as the categorical imperative of Individual Psychology ' that every man's duty is to work to make his profession, whatever it is, into a brotherhood, a friendship, a social unity with a powerful morale of co-operation, and that if a man does not want to do this his own psychological state is precarious ' ;[3] which admirable piece of horse-sense unfortunately does not go very far in solving the metaphysical problem. For all metaphysical theory will premise that *the permanent capacities of the mind are not examinable at all.* It can only concern itself with that which is already become conscious. To this the psychologist will no doubt reply that the permanent capacities of the mind, in some of its manifestations at least, are most certainly examinable. In fact they are being examined every day with the greatest particularity in the consulting room, and yield startling results, very often to the great inconvenience and alarm of the subject. Yet for all that, Dr. Jung for one will admit that if you were to ask him what the psyche really *is*, he can give no manner of answer at all.

We have to accept the unconscious because on the basis of empiric evidence it serves as an indispensable hypothesis wherewith to unravel psychic processes. But the psychologist also assumes that ' the unconscious perceives, has purposes and intuitions, feels and thinks as does the conscious mind.'[4] Groddeck even went so far as to assert that we are compelled by the ' It ' to identify its doings with our own, to suppose (though erroneously) that ' its purposes and feelings are determined by the conscious

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[1] *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, p. 261.

[2] Introduction by Phillipe Mairet to *The Science of Living*.

[3] *The Science of Living*, by Alfred Adler.

[4] *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, p. 214.

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mind as the will and purpose of the Ego.'[1] I wish to point out that such an assumption can have no meaning for the philosophic critic, for, even if it can be proved, this purpose in the unconscious, whatever it is, must from the nature of the case be an irresponsible purpose, *i.e.*, it can have no relation to a theory of life that accords with a system of Ends. In point of fact all psychologists agree that volition or purpose in the unconscious is a-moral, for it is contingent on the law of compensation that knows nothing of Value, and is only concerned with its own satisfaction. And this admission plunges us straight into the difficulties, as I see them.

Mr. Ralph Eaton, assistant professor of philosophy at Harvard university, however, in introducing a survey of the psychological principles of Freud, Adler and Jung does not appear to think these difficulties much to worry about. ' Psychological analysis,' he writes, ' as practised by the doctor on the patient, is a method of restoring mental balance to persons who are suffering from neuroses, that is, persons unable to adjust themselves to life and who manifest this inability in pathological symptoms.'[2] And it is precisely this method which gives the doctor his peculiar distinction. Whether he likes it or not his doctoring must be yoked to some more or less explicit teleology, since it is his firm belief that ' mental balance is ultimately restored to the patient only by giving him, or causing him to create from within himself, a philosophy of life, a new attitude towards himself, his fellow beings, nature, social institutions and the gods.'[3] It follows that, if this belief is correct, ' a neurosis lies on the borderline between a moral and a medical problem.'[4]

The fact that vast numbers of people to-day are rushing to the psycho-therapist in their troubles, and the intense and increasing interest in the subject on all sides, is pretty plain proof that neurosis, though only a new name for something that has always existed, has become a common enough condition. Jung, indeed, insists that he is a bold man nowadays who would roundly declare, without so much as by-your-leave from the doctor, that

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[1] *The World of Man*, p. 78.
[2] *Secret Ways of the Mind*, p. 7. W. M. Kranefeldt.
[3] *Secret Ways of the Mind*, p. 7.
[4] Op. cit., p. 8.

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he is altogether free of it. No wonder! For if it be true that the neurotic can only be cured by the acquisition of a philosophy of life, it must be so because hitherto he had been without one, because his attitude towards himself and his fellow men was patently false. And Jung points to the prime cause for this sorry state of affairs, which is surely obvious enough. The religious and philosophical doctrines which formerly lent some appearance of order to the universe, and which gave people a stable framework into which to fit their notions about life and death, have all been exploded one by one without being replaced by anything certain, and all are left to scramble from the cradle to the grave, bewildered, deafened and scarified, on the sole principle of *sauve qui peut* for guidance. Thus Dr. M. E. Harding: 'In these days when the outer props to which man has pinned his faith seem to be crumbling, it is all the more necessary that an inner security be built up which shall be able to withstand the shocks of outer misfortune.'[1] And Dr. Harding hits it off nicely what a great majority of the so-called civilized world is after when she continues '. . . the religious in misfortune have in all ages turned to the spiritual realm, discounting the values of this world. Such an other-worldliness no longer suffices the modern man who desires a more complete and satisfying life *here and now*.'[2] For this reason, to quote another disciple of Dr. Jung's, 'the point of view which he (Jung) lays before mankind to-day is a challenge to the spirit, and evokes an active response in everyone who has felt within himself the urge to grow beyond his inheritance.'[3] After this we need hardly be surprised when Mr. Eaton proposes that since 'we can no longer accept the God of Christianity and must have *some ultimate view* to rest on, we can at least accept the doctor.'[4] Though to some of us, and indeed to the modest Dr. Jung himself, this may seem an over-enthusiastic view.

There is no doubt, however, that the emphasis in this philosophy which the doctor hopes to formulate on the basis of his findings, is on the here and the now, with the implication

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[1] *The Way of All Women*, p. 5.
[2] Op. cit., p. 6.
[3] *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*: Translator's Preface, p. 6.
[4] *Secret Ways of the Mind*, Preface, p. 9.

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that life thus properly conducted according to the most recent psychological principles, will have a chance of being richer, fuller, altogether more satisfying than it has ever been before, and there will be no more need for foolish talk about evil and tragedy. Moreover all this can be accomplished without any divine or ulterior aids, simply because we have rediscovered the old Greek maxim 'Know Thyself,' and have given it a deeper meaning.

Now it should be remembered that all precepts of the psychologist, however sound they may appear, can only have an *ad hoc* value. The religio-medici prides itself upon being eminently practical. That is, it must work. But in order that it can work, in order when treating a patient to obtain the maximum chance of success, the doctor, Jung expressly states, must not judge. It is a fundamental principle of psycho-analysis that ordinary moral advice is of no use whatever to the neurotic. For neurosis, strictly defined, is a conflict in a person between the conscious and the unconscious, in which, it may be said, the unconscious motives have, generally speaking, a way of triumphing. Condemned to this psychological determinism such a person cannot be accounted in every sense a responsible being. For it is his moral nature that is thus involved, and his impulses and emotions that are being confused and determined, and determined in a peculiarly subtle and secretive way, by neurosis.

Yet whatever the doctor may say about adopting an a-moral attitude towards the patient, the fact remains that he certainly does make judgments, and therefore he must have a standard of values by which to judge. You cannot in the same breath maintain that neurosis is in part a moral problem and also that an a-moral attitude is essential to cure it. At least you cannot maintain this, it seems to me, without turning the whole theory and practice of psycho-therapy into a relativistic nightmare. I could perhaps make the point clearer by citing a case described by Dr. Jung, of a young man who consulted him after he had tried to cure himself by working out a detailed analysis of his own neurosis. This young man had made a study of medical literature, succeeded in gaining insight into the casual connections of his neurotic condition, and yet was not cured. Jung admits that the case perplexed him at first, for if it were only a question of this he should have got better. It then emerged that the young man had been in the

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habit of allowing his holidays at expensive pleasure resorts to be paid for by a poor school teacher who loved him and had to pinch and scrape to indulge her lover's extravagance. This fact he had suppressed since he scorned the idea that science had anything to do with morals. Whereupon Jung pointed out to him that his neurosis lay precisely in this moral want and the false attitude to life that resulted from it. He was ill because, according to Jung's interpretation, the young man's unconscious psyche could not stomach the immorality of his rational life.

We see from this that, when it comes to the point, and whether or no the unconscious has really a mysterious faculty for perceptions of right and wrong, the doctor most certainly does commit himself to a moral judgment. But when we probe a little further and inquire into the reasons, all that we learn is that 'the large majority of civilized persons simply cannot tolerate such behaviour. The moral attitude is a real factor with which the psychologist must reckon if he is not to commit the gravest errors.'[1] Which, after all, doesn't get us much further. What actually the large majority of civilized persons will or will not tolerate is neither here nor there. As a matter-of-fact vast numbers of apparently civilized persons tolerate all sorts of enormities with the greatest complaisance. But, we may well ask, what is this moral attitude really that the psychologist has to take into account? And can the patient be said to be responsible for it when it is assumed that the unconscious motives govern his moral nature? As it is very difficult to find explicit answers to questions of this sort, we are left wondering whether the psychologist's values are not a rather nebulous affair. And that when he begins to philosophize on the basis of his discoveries, he merely short-circuits the teleological question and leaves us in a more desperate obscurity than we were before. The fact remains that the lesson of conscience, whatever else it may teach, points, to borrow a phrase from Professor John Laird, 'to our inescapable incorporation into a kingdom of ends.'[2] A person is not led to consider his conduct wrong because he discovers that he is neurotic ; that may be so in a given case or it may not. But wrongness or rightness are related

[1] *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, p. 224.
[2] John Laird: *The Idea of the Soul*, p. 125.

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to the fact of his soul being always imputable for its acts ; which responsibility is implied in his being able to govern his conduct according to a knowledge of good and evil. A fundamental postulate in any theory of the psyche must therefore be, that it is capable of persistent self-organization ; that in spite of all disturbances, dissociations and intermittances, continuity is one of its prime characteristics. Whether we are sick or in good health, enjoy good or misfortune, we have to recognize that, unless we are lunatics, our conscious nature is within our control. Thus only, and by realizing that, in doing such or such a thing we are choosing the best course open to us, can we justify our actions. ' We are moral beings precisely in so far as we acknowledge and obey this dominion of superlative worth.'[1] We should finally remember that our responsibility does not end at the boundaries of the personal self, but that we can be called to account for whatever changes we effect in the world and in the lives of others. There is nothing for it but to resign ourselves to the ineluctable law that the consequences of our behaviour follow after us, and that therefore we can still be imputed when we are dead.

To return now to the problems of literary criticism, it should be clear, for the reasons I have stated, that no amount of analysis of unconscious motivation in the artist's psyche can influence our opinion of his work. Whatever the surrealist may say about it, imaginative literature is the result of a deliberate organization of material for a certain end, and we can only assess and evaluate it with reference to that end. No doubt the psychologist can illuminate certain points that would otherwise remain obscure, but such explanations must not thereupon be applied to our standards of value. If *e.g.*, the critic judges that much of the later work of D. H. Lawrence is inferior, he is in no way helped by having it pointed out that towards the end of his life Lawrence's neurotic traits gained the upper hand and that *therefore* his work suffered. His work suffered, if it did, because he failed to concentrate on the principles and the methods that make for good art. And it is my contention that Lawrence, whether or not a neurotic, certainly could have continued to concentrate on these matters if he had not got it firmly fixed in his head that he was something more

[1] *The Idea of the Soul*, p. 125.

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than an artist altogether, that he had found a way of saving the human race. Again, to analyse in minute detail what phrases or expressions in the poems might seem symptomatic of Hopkins's neurosis, cannot suggest anything of value about Hopkins the poet.[1] At best it may offer a plausible explanation why so fine a poet as Hopkins could be guilty of such extraordinary lapses. Yet, after all, such psychological explanation brings us round again to the teleological problem. For let us be quite certain about it, the artist does not fail because he is at the mercy of unconscious forces that drive him he knows not whither. If that were so, all values, all judgments would then always have to be referred back to the psychological determinants. And the direction, the purpose, the end of these determinants (if indeed, it is possible to speak of purpose in relation to the unconscious), are unknown and, apparently, unknowable. We cannot discover anything certain about the real nature of the psyche, and psychology offers no argument that it shows any tendency to realize itself in perfection. Whereas good art, no matter of what age or country, has, of all things in life, this prime characteristic: it is the palpable proof of the artist's struggle to mould material from an imperfect to a more perfect state. So that we must conclude that until psychology can better illuminate such essential matters than it has done hitherto, its findings should be deemed unsatisfactory as a principle of literary criticism.

RICHARD MARCH.

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[1] *vide* article entitled ' Blood and Bran ' in *New Verse*, April, 1935.

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PSYCHOLOGY AND CRITICISM

A COMMENT

IF there were no more in psycho-analysis than the stupidities that Mr. March so justly attacks we should have only to agree and thank him. And I take advantage of his kindness in allowing me to add a note to his essay because the psycho-analytic approach at its best seems to me more formidable than he suggests—in some ways more valuable and in others more dangerous ; and in addition because he bases his criticism on a philosophical argument that may be less compelling for some readers than for Mr. March himself.

To see the full potential strength of the psycho-analytic case (not for the moment in its literary significance) we are bound to make a distinction that Mr. March neglects, that between the psycho-therapy which supplements partial analysis with suggestion, advice, exhortation or encouragement, and the treatment which is purely analytic. Doctors who practise the former kind do admirable work in treating the simpler sufferers from psycho-neurosis and the grosser symptoms of less simple patients ; and we may any of us be glad enough of their help. But as Mr. March shows they rely on a ready-made notion of what is ' normal,' and consequently on a rule-of-thumb morality, even though they apply it tactfully and sympathetically. Pure analytic treatment may rarely be achieved, and analysis sometimes fail to state it clearly even as an ideal. Nevertheless it does exist as a possibility. In this treatment the only standard the analyst starts with (and implicitly invites the patient to acquiesce in) is that the patient should not delude himself. His encouragement and help are directed only to getting the patient to sort himself out, so that he no longer attributes false or inadequate causes to his desires and anxieties, and no longer engages in activities with badly mistaken notions of their functions for him.

In therapy, needless to say, immense complications enter into this simple scheme. The theory too is obscured by the dubious doctrine of sublimation which treats self-deception as a separate and desirable psychological process so long as the resulting activity is fully acceptable to the patient (which usually means that it must

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be socially acceptable too). Similarly, even in their theory, some analysts acquiesce in repressions if only their results are ' good ' ; as, for instance, Glover: ' . . . although essentially a system of flight, repression has justified itself biologically as much as, if not more than, any other form of flight from danger. By its help primitive impulse has been sufficiently weakened to permit of the residue being dealt with by what *we* call civilized reactions. Repression is a gigantic self-deception of which the self is unaware.' (*War, Sadism and Pacifism*. My italics for key word). This means abandoning the strongest point in favour of analytic treatment and joining forces with the therapy which advises and directs.

Thus an analytic treatment is conceivable and has been practised in which the analyst's only ethical assumption is that self-deception is a bad thing. From this we can approach Mr. March's relativistic nightmare of treating moral problems a-morally. The problems of the analyst's patient are moral only in the sense that they are problems of choice. People often fail to realize that analysis, although it sometimes dissipates problems, at others only makes them clear enough to enable the patient to choose between alternatives ; no one has yet found a way of eating his cake and having it.

The question of what happens to the rejected alternative has received little attention from analysts, but it seems clear that we must recognize a process, perhaps to be called ' inhibition ' (as distinct from ' repression ') by which we remain aware of a desire which we don't intend to satisfy, and which makes more complex the state of mind from which our final action issues.

If choice of this kind is moral choice there is no reason why the patient should not be assisted to it, led to it, quite a-morally, so long as he is not directed which alternative to choose. If Mr. March says that this is not strictly moral choice in his sense, then again his nightmare lifts, for this is the only kind of morality that pure analytic treatment deals in. Here, of course, Mr. March and I are at cross-purposes owing to my talking of a hypothetically perfect *analytic* treatment while he has the frailer therapists in mind. And the example he quotes illustrates both the strength and weakness of his own case ; for Jung undoubtedly did give this peculiarly silly account of the young man whose sweetheart

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paid for his holidays, and yet to rest content with exposing the muddle of Jung's views on morality is to leave a much stronger analytic case unanswered. Jung sees the analyst as a saviour who mediates atonement between the individual and the Collective Unconscious ; for Freud, he is an instrument which the patient uses in order to re-live and bring to order the experiences with which he originally confused himself.

Turning belatedly to the literary aspect of the question, I find it hard to believe that our opinion of a writer's work can be quite unaffected by the discovery that it is wholly or in part a psycho-neurotic symptom in him. The question is an artificial one, because, as Mr. March seems to suggest, literary criticism is likely to detect the fault without the help of psychology ; what really detects it, of course, is neither ' psychology ' nor ' literary criticism,' but the range, accuracy, and close integration of the sensitive reader's experience as he reads. It is insensitive readers who draw on psychology for their critical insight, just as other insensitive readers draw on literary canons. Supposing, however, that psychological knowledge did unexpectedly reveal that a book we admired was a psycho-neurotic symptom in the writer—that must surely affect our attitude.

It would not affect it if we could treat a book as being something quite impersonal, something as accidentally pleasing as a breaking wave. But Mr. March doesn't suggest that we do that. He would evidently agree that we think of it as being a human product, as implicitly sanctioning and developing interests and ideals and attitudes of our own. That being so it does become disconcerting to find that for the author it satisfied certain impulses which we ourselves are glad not to possess or which, if we do possess, we think better left unsatisfied. The same thing surely goes on in social intercourse of a simpler kind than literature: we enjoy the *bon mot* with which our friend disposes of a charlatan, but if we know that he is incidentally working off irrelevant spite against either the charlatan or the world in general the flavour of the remark is spoilt. And this is true whether he is conscious of his spite or not. The *bon mot* is as good as ever regarded as something impersonal, but as a human product it no longer gives us pure satisfaction—an element of distaste or regret comes in and makes our state of mind more complex. Many people find this more complex attitude extremely painful to maintain, especially

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because in most actual cases the neurotic element can be detected as a flaw in the work itself. We dislike the writer and his reason for writing, but much of the book itself we like. Some of the controversy around writers like Lawrence and (at a different literary level) Baron Corvo is probably due to this conflict of feeling.

However, Mr. March seems to think that as long as the ' impure ' motive is unconscious it ought not to bother us or influence our opinion. To me it seems impossible that it should not. This may be because I take the Unconscious to be created by the individual out of material that he has failed to deal with consciously ; it ought not to be confused with innate ' propensities ' or ' instinctual dispositions,' like sex or food-seeking, although these find their source in non-conscious levels of vital activity and although, of course, they may contribute to the Unconscious as well as to conscious life. But no doubt philosophical assumptions divide us here. When, for instance, Mr. March says ' . . . unless we are lunatics, our conscious nature is within our control,' my unformulated philosophical preconceptions genuinely prevent me from understanding what he means: I had thought that we all were lunatics in some degree ; and I can't think what ' our control ' is unless it is precisely ' our conscious nature ' (admitting of course that there are hierarchies of desire within it). And no doubt this sounds complete nonsense to Mr. March.

With these gulfs between us I find it especially gratifying to be able to agree so thoroughly with the general trend of Mr. March's argument. Had he gone on to attack what seems to me one of the most serious errors of the analysts—the idea that the arts are sublimations, substitutes for something else—I imagine that we should here have been entirely at one. My own conviction is that psycho-*analysis* (in the strict and literal sense that I have tried to indicate) can only be good for literature, as for every activity. It would naturally eradicate the urge to write from heaps of our present authors, but who minds that? The literature we want, I take it, is non-substitutive and not a symptom of some other need in the writer ; and psycho-analysis at its best might well be one of the tools with which we could approach such a literature. Nevertheless at the present time we may be best employed with Mr. March in hunting down the stupidities which temporarily haunt the psyches of so many analysts, and, still more, of their hangers-on.

D. W. HARDING.

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SHAKESPEARE AND PROFIT INFLATIONS

NOTES FOR THE HISTORIAN OF CULTURE.

I.

IN spite of the frequency with which ' the effects of environment,' ' cultural superstructure ' and similar phrases appear in contemporary discussion we are still largely in the dark concerning the nature of the problem, or problems, that are covered by such terms. When we discuss the relations between economic conditions and ' culture ' what, exactly, are we talking about?

The need for investigation can be indicated by a few quotations. In the Preface to the *Critique of Political Economy* Marx wrote:

> ' The methods of production in material life determine the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness.'[1]

Later Marxists have not got any further in showing the nature of the influence of ' methods of production ' on ' consciousness,' on the ' spiritual processes of life.' Thus R. D. Charques:

> ' It is necessary to bear in mind the simple truth that a people's culture takes form and colour from the economic ordering of society. It is part of the civilized superstructure of art, morals, religion, law and the rest which is built up on the basis of the productive relations in society.'[2]

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[1] *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Tr. N. I. Stone, Second Edition, p. 11.

[2] ' Literature and the Working-Class Student,' *Adult Education*, September, 1934, p. 50.

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This, one would have thought, deserved some application and expansion from those who were intuitively conscious of its significance ; but Mr. Charques is not alone in failing to elucidate the ' simple truth,' and ' form and colour ' remain mere counters. A simple relationship is of course constantly assumed. John Strachey, for example, finds that the Catholic Revival of recent years is ' just what we should expect,'

> ' For life, with the growth of large-scale production, is becoming less and less individual and more and more communal again. Thus, for anyone who can achieve religious belief at all, the Catholic form of Christianity is becoming increasingly appropriate.'[1]

Such boldness in grasping the prickly subject of religion prepares us for the facility with which Mr. Strachey explains literature in terms of economics ; here is his account of the genesis of *Ash Wednesday* :

> ' Since writing *The Waste Land* Mr. Eliot, encouraged no doubt by the 1922-1929 period of capitalist recovery, has left the despair of the Waste Land behind him and taken up the typical position of a highly intellectual reactionary.'[2]

And for the Marxist the past presents no more difficulties than the present :

> ' A tasteless welter of conflicting styles was in the very nature of industrialism. Keats begins his career by re-writing the myth of *Endymion* after a prolonged study of Spenser, and ends it by writing *Hyperion* after a prolonged study of Milton.'[3]

Nor have non-Marxists proved more illuminating ; Mr. Keynes, for example, has allowed himself to remark :

> ' We were just in a financial position to afford Shakespeare at the moment when he presented himself. [' Don't you think,'

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[1]*The Coming Struggle for Power*, p. 61. Is this, one wonders, the kind of ' explanation ' that Lenin had in mind when he remarked that ' in explaining our programme we must necessarily explain the actual historical and economic roots of religion ' ?

[2]Ibid, p. 221.

[3]Philip Henderson, *Literature and a Changing Civilisation*, p. 78.

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one is tempted to ask, ' we might afford just one more now that the slump is over?'] . . . I offer it as a thesis for examination by those who like rash generalizations, that by far the larger proportion of the world's great writers and artists have flourished in the atmosphere of buoyancy, exhilaration and the freedom from economic cares felt by the governing class, which is engendered by profit inflations.'[1]

It is hard to know what purpose remarks of this kind are meant to serve. Marx was concerned with forging a practical weapon, and some narrowing of vision was, perhaps, necessary ;[2] the other writers seem to be engaged in nothing more serious than intellectual flag-waving (Mr. Keynes is obviously amusing himself). But what these quotations show—they could be multiplied—is that if we are to avoid the vaguest generalities we have to give a good deal of hard thought to certain fundamental questions. Are the non-economic activities that we call ' culture '—forms of activity that are engaged in as ends, not as means—in any way related to bread-and-butter activities as effect and cause? If so, exactly how are they determined by economic activities? Are there any other factors besides the purely economic ones that determine the culture of a particular place and time? Is there any essential difference between the popular culture of the present and that of, say, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? How has the relationship between earning a living and ' end ' activities altered since the Industrial Revolution? What do we mean by ' economic '? And what do we mean by ' culture '? These and

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[1] *A Treatise on Money*, Vol. II, p. 154.

[2] ' Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that younger writers sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasize this main principle in opposition to our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or the opportunity to allow the other events involved in the interaction to come into their rights . . . And I cannot exempt many of the more recent " Marxists " from this reproach, for the most wonderful rubbish has been produced from this quarter too.' Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Correspondence 1846-1895, A Selection* (Martin Lawrence), p. 477.

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many related questions need to be answered (Indeed the questions need to be more precisely formulated), not for academic reasons, but in order to help us to achieve a humanly satisfactory attitude towards our most pressing problems of politics, economics and education, to decide what truth—what meaning, even—is in such remarks as, ' With the victory of Socialism is bound up the whole future of art,'[1] or, ' A change in society is more imperative . . . than the retention of this or that tradition of literature.'[2]

The fact that some clearing of the ground is urgent may excuse the literary critic, conscious of only a modest equipment in economics and sociology, who presumes to put forward a few suggestions on historical method. So far those who are *nct* interested in ' this or that tradition of literature ' have contrived to say nothing at all.

II.

The exasperating haziness of all those who have attempted to make some correlation between economic activities and culture is not due merely to the lack of a satisfactory definition of the latter term. Perhaps it is due (at any rate one may suggest it provisionally) to the fact that ' the materialist interpretation of history ' has not yet been pushed far enough. It is one thing to say that ' in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, *and from which alone can be explained, the* political and *intellectual history of that epoch,*'[3] and another to attempt to substantiate the phrase which I have italicized in detail. Methods of production and cultural superstructure may be related in the realm of abstract dialectic, but no one (anthropologists dealing with primitive peoples apart) has yet established the relation in terms of fact and experience.

One reason is that the subject, as usually formulated, is too large and general. It can only be discussed at all in relation to

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[1]Ralph Fox, ' The Relation of Literature to Dialectical Materialism,' *Aspects of Dialectical Materialism*, p. 69.

[2]R. D. Charques, *Adult Education*, September, 1934, p. 52.

[3]Engels, Preface to the English translation of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, p. 6.

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a particular place and time, and then it is seen to split up into a multitude of smaller problems, a bewildering complexity supervening upon the simplicity of the dialectical formulation. The first necessity is to narrow the field. If, for example, we ask ourselves how we should set about determining the relations between dramatic literature (leaving aside religion, lyric poetry, painting, pastimes . . .) and ' the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange ' in the Shakespearean period, we are more likely to establish a few useful conclusions than if we continue to discuss the relation of one abstraction to another. It is that question that I propose briefly to consider.

To the economic historian the period covered by the life of Shakespeare is of unusual interest. On the one hand there was the large-scale development of capitalist enterprise, on the other there were the traditional forms of organization of trade and industry, forms which had not yet become anachronistic 'survivals'; the result of the double aspect of the age (' mediæval ' and ' modern ') being that the reign of James I was ' perhaps the period of the greatest economic confusion in our history.' Now the drama, more obviously than any other form of art, is a social product ; in the plays produced in the early seventeenth century, if anywhere (it was pre-eminently a period when the theatre was flourishing), we should be able to trace the connection with the economic bases of society.

We may begin with those plays which have a more or less overt social reference. None of them, we notice, is a dramatization of an economic problem or consciously intended as propaganda for this or that form of economic organization, and only a few of them—*The Miseries of Enforced Marriage* is an example—are meant to make the audience think about questions of social morality. (There is no dramatization of the Miseries of Monopoly.) What we do find, however, is that the material on which the dramatists work—in comedy and history play—is drawn from—has an immediate reference to—the movements, the significant figures of contemporary life ; the satire on usurers, the profiteers and the newly rich, on social ambition and the greed for money could be abundantly illustrated. And the social interests that are drawn on are not those of one class alone. The narrowing of the range of active interests in Fletcher and in the romances and

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comedies of the Caroline dramatists, with a corresponding lessening of intensity, is an unmistakable sign of decadence.

Of the dramatists handling social themes Jonson is undoubtedly the greatest, but comparison makes plain that his unique qualities as an artist spring from a common ground that he shares with the majority of his contemporaries. That common ground is represented by certain habits of observation, by certain beliefs or attitudes (the better word) concerning human desires, ' their relative worth and dignity.' In his handling of ambition, greed, lust, acquisitiveness and so on he implicitly, but clearly, refers to a more than personal scheme of values. Jonson in short was working in a tradition. What we have to determine is where that tradition ' came from.'[1]

The poise and sureness with which Jonson confronts the significant developments of his age, strong in his knowledge of what are, and what are not, fundamental human qualities, has been illustrated in these pages.[2] These significant developments—most of them—were aspects of the growth of capitalism ; and company-promoting, ' projecting ' and industrial enterprise certainly formed an important part of the world which Jonson and his fellows observed, the world which gave them their knowledge of human nature. It is equally obvious that the standards of judgment that they brought to bear were not formed in that new world of industrial enterprise. They belonged to an older world which was still ' normal,' a world of small communities in which, as a recent economic historian has remarked, ' human problems can be truly perceived, which in larger social structures must more

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[1]To the artist the value of a living tradition is that it allows him to concentrate upon his task as a poet ; he does not have to do everything for himself. The distance between Jonson's work and Dekker's is the measure of what he actually had to do ' for himself,' and proof enough of genius. But the point is that Jonson had *something* in common with Dekker, with Heywood, with the journalists and moralists of the common people, whereas the few poets and novelists who count at the present day not only cannot share, they are inevitably hostile to, the attitudes of suitable readers of the *Star*, the *Sunday Express*, or the *Tatler*.

[2]See ' Tradition and Ben Jonson,' *Scrutiny*, September, 1935.

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or less necessarily be sacrificed.'[1]

Here, I think, is suggested one line of connection between dramatic literature and the economic ordering of society. If this account is true[2] it is plain that the social dramatists owed a great deal to the traditional economic morality inherited from the middle ages. Although that morality was given precise formulation and transmitted by the Church (amongst other agencies), it had been forged in small local units of trade and industry. It was forged because it was useful ; in a subsistence economy a community could only exist at all by acting, in the main, as a regulated community. When Dekker damns the ' City doctrine '

> —Nature sent man into the world, alone,
> Without all company, but to care for one[3]—

it is clear that he has inherited a morality which the middle ages had found—shall we say?—expedient.

To say, however, that some of the general attitudes which Jonson manipulates into art can be traced fairly directly to certain ' methods of production ' does not in the least support the Marxist analysis ; it merely suggests a doubt of its relevance. For the point has been made in saying that the economic organization from which the bulk of Elizabethan social morality derived was that of the small, local community *in which ' human problems can be truly perceived '*—an organization, then, that was not merely ' economic '—not merely determined by ' economic ' motives. But what is ' economic'? Clearly, the sense in which a mediæval township was an ' economic ' unit is very different from the sense in which a large-scale industrial undertaking is ' economic.' The category, in short, is, here, a misleading abstraction.

An examination of the social themes of the Elizabethan-Jacobean drama will take us no further than this. But overt social

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[1]Heckscher, *Mercantilism*, Vol. I, p. 42.

[2]I am aware of what must appear a considerable element of dogmatism here and throughout this section. I can only say that none of my assertions is unsupported by evidence and that I hope shortly to produce this in detail.

[3]*If it be not Good, the Devil is in It*, Dekker, *Dramatic Works* (Pearson), Vol. III, p. 324.

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references form only a small part of that drama ; what we have next to enquire is whether economic conceptions such as ' class ' (expressing the productive relationships of society) can be used to explain more general aspects of the plays of the period.

At this point a parenthetical return to the ' rash generalization ' which Mr. Keynes based on his analysis of the economic situation at the end of the sixteenth century, may be found useful: the remark ' that by far the larger proportion of the world's great writers and artists have flourished in the atmosphere of buoyancy, exhilaration and the freedom from economic cares felt by the governing class, which is engendered by profit inflations.' Having noted an important error in fact—few of the Elizabethan governing class actually enjoyed ' freedom from economic cares '—we may ask ourselves a few questions: Who got the bulk of the boom profits? How did the profit-makers spend their money? (In encouraging the arts, or in making further investments? Or did scapegrace heirs direct the new wealth to the notoriously underpaid writers?). More important, why did the profit inflation of ' modern days in the United States '—to which Mr. Keynes compares the Elizabethan ' bull ' movement—produce what it did instead of a national culture? Of course, Shakespeare's theatre could not have existed if the country had been in the depths of economic misery ; but to say this is not to say anything important.

It is, however, true that the Elizabethan drama owed, if not its existence, at least its fortunate development to the persistent patronage of the governing class, a class drawing its wealth mainly from the land and conscious of the encroachment of the ' new men ' of commerce and industry. May it not, then, reflect the ' ideology ' of that class in more subtle ways than can be explored in the explicit social attitudes (' popular ' rather than ' aristocratic ') which have been examined? To ask the question is to display its ineptitude. It can only be answered affirmatively by some such formula as that ' Shakespeare's tragic outlook on the world was consequential upon his being the dramatic expression of the feudal aristocracy which in Elizabeth's day had lost their former dominating position '[1]—a remark which, since it clearly

[1] ' Shakespeare Through Russian Eyes, A condensation and free translation of two articles, by Lunacharsky and P. S. Kogan,'

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does not spring from the complexity of full experience of Shakespeare's poetry, does not lead back to anything that can be grasped and discussed.[2]

The influence of 'the governing class' was subtler than that. It was shown in the way in which Elizabethan dramatic verse reflected their interest in rhetoric, in psychology and in morals, interests which their economic position allowed them to cultivate, but which can only be explained in terms of their education, their religious outlook, and their pastimes (music, we remember, was almost as important as fencing). Education, religion and pastimes, we are told, can all be related to 'the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange,' but that, at present, is an article of faith. And the Marxist diagnosis (with the implication, here, that cultural attributes were *useful* to the leisure class) seems curiously irrelevant when we realize that the interests which I have noted permeated the whole of society: the rhetoric of Shakespeare or Chapman is paralleled at a lower level by the rhetoric of Kyd; the crude psychology of the upper-class 'Character' is surpassed by the shrewd folk observation that was to find its supreme expression in Bunyan; and if the plays of Chapman or Tourneur gratified a highly-developed taste for moral casuistry, the pamphlets of Dekker indicate that his popular audience had at least some healthy interest in unvarnished morals. Above all, there was no barrier of language between higher and lower such as separates the different ranges of the contemporary reading public.

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made by Stephen Garry, *The Listener*, 27th December, 1934. For another (Marxist) view, see 'Marx and Shakespeare,' by T. A. Jackson, *International Literature*, No. 2, 1936. Shakespeare, one is glad to learn, was a 'healthy, well-poised, sceptical, melioristic' humanist, 'somewhat to the Left of the centre of advanced bourgeois opinion.' 'To expect from Shakespeare (in between the years 1590-1612) the same appreciation of the revolutionary potentialities of the proletariat as was possible to the genius of Marx and Engels *in and after 1844*, would be to expect an anachronistic miracle.'

[2]I do not see any point in conducting an argument at the level of Mr. Shaw's account of Shakespeare's 'snobbery.' We all know the passages about 'stinking breath,' etc.

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The achievement of the great age of English drama (the twenty or twenty-five years, say, from *Troilus and Cressida* and *Henry IV*) was due to the bringing together and the lively interplay of different interests within a fairly homogeneous culture, at a time when ' the art of the people was as closely mingled with the art of the coteries as was the speech of the people that delighted in rhythmical animation, in idiom, in images . . . with the unchanging speech of the poets.'[1] Elizabethan drama, even in its higher ranges, was not the expression of a ' class ' culture at all.

So far as I can see there is only one other correlation between Elizabethan drama and the economic ordering of society that it is possible to attempt. It is an essential point that is made by the remark that ' Shakespeare did not create his own language '—his achievement would have been impossible ' if English had not already been there '[2]—and one can work backwards from Shakespeare's English to the community which forged it as a vital medium. The advantage that Shakespeare enjoyed in being able to exploit to the full a popular idiom is paralleled by—is, in fact, part of—corresponding advantages in habits of perception and discrimination, in emotional and intellectual organization—in sensibility. What those advantages were is revealed by comparison with that ' impersonal language that has come, not out of individual life, nor out of life at all, but out of necessities of commerce, of parliament, of board schools, of hurried journeys by rail.'[3] They were the advantages that spring from ' living at first hand,' in close touch with ' primary production.'[4] To-day, unless he is exceptionally lucky, the ordinary man has to make a deliberate effort to penetrate a hazy medium which smothers his essential human nature, which interposes between him and things as they

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[1]W. B. Yeats, ' What is Popular Poetry?' *Essays*, p. 12.

[2]F. R. Leavis, *For Continuity*, pp. 164, 215. The context of both phrases is relevant to this discussion.

[3]W. B. Yeats, *Essays*, p. 373. ' One must not forget that the death of language, the substitution of phrases as nearly impersonal as algebra for words and rhythms varying from man to man, is but a part of the tyranny of impersonal things.' Ibid.

[4]For expansion and illustration of this statement I may refer to my ' Elizabethan Prose,' *Scrutiny*, March, 1934.

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are ; a medium formed by the lowest common denominator of feelings, perceptions and ideas acceptable to the devitalized products of a machine economy. The luck of the Elizabethan in *not* having such a veil to pierce, in being able to obtain whatever satisfactions were possible at first hand, was of course due to ' the prevailing methods of production and exchange,' to the fact that mass-production, standardization and division of labour, although not unknown, were still exceptional and undeveloped. But—we are back to the point that I made earlier in this section—to say that the qualities embodied in Shakespeare's English had an economic base, is to remind ourselves that making a living was not merely a *means*, and that the ' economic ' activities which helped to mould that supremely expressive medium fostered qualities (perceptions and general habits of response) that were not ' economic ' at all. We remind ourselves, in short, of the dangerous facility with which the word ' economic ' tempts us to beg the essential questions. Dramatic poetry of course was only one part of a larger whole, but it seems that only along lines similar to those that I have indicated can we hope to map the social and economic bases of Elizabethan-Jacobean culture and to make some profitable correlations.

III.

The conclusions to be drawn even from this preliminary survey would seem to be sufficiently obvious, but there are reasons—we have seen—for making the obvious unevadably explicit.

1. The Marxian formulation—' It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but their social being determines their consciousness '—is not ' wrong,' in the sense of its opposite being ' right ' ; it is an over-simplification which, accepted, blinds the social historian to what should be focus of his investigation, namely the *quality* of living in a particular period.

2. Economic categories are inadequate to describe the basic activities of life when these are used to ' explain ' ' the cultural superstructure ' ; it is only by a sleight of hand that the methods of production of, say, the Elizabethan and the modern periods can be reduced to the same level of abstract discourse, and their differences discussed as *merely* differences of economic organization.

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3. Quality (' culture ') can only be fully apprehended when it is concretely embodied. Since ' facts about ' a particular period can give only a vague, general impression of its life, the only start for a cultural investigation professing completeness is from literature, considered not for what it describes but for the qualities that it embodies.

These conclusions are of course opposed to both the theoretical and the practical implications of the Marxist formulation of cultural questions: the theoretical implication that the dialectic is ' all-embracing '[1] and logically self-complete ; the practical implication that if the social machine is perfected, if everyone is given his due share of *economic* satisfactions, a satisfactory culture will ' inevitably ' emerge, as culture may be said to have emerged from the productive methods of the past.[2] To reject these assumptions is not to commit oneself to reaction. (No one need suppose that I imagine a retreat from a machine economy to be possible or desirable, or that I can envisage a solution of our economic *impasse* on other than socialist lines). It *is* to commit oneself to a conscious attempt to preserve continuity with those qualities that were spontaneously fostered by a non-industrial economy, but which cannot be apprehended in economic formulations.

Cultural history of the kind desiderated still remains to be

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[1] ' The laws of materialist dialectics are all-embracing, general laws of becoming.' N. I. Bukharin, *Marxism and Modern Thought*, p. 29.

[2] *cf.* A. L. Rowse, *Politics and the Younger Generation*, p. 186: ' The times are not propitious to art ; and it may well be that there is greater immediate scope for intellectual advance, particularly if this is to be an age of fundamental political change. That, if it comes about, would tend to attract the best intelligence of the nation, and perhaps to denude the arts of recruits somewhat ; at least, for the first generation. But the main lines of reconstruction once laid down, there should be a return to art and culture, with renewed vitality and inspiration, in the succeeding age.' It is that ' should be ' that gives the game away—in more senses than one. Compare also the general tenour (contradicted at times within the book itself) of Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution*.

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written. It will not be—need I say?—a 'literary' history, and the literary critic who undertakes it will need to submit to a strenuous extra-literary discipline—including the discipline of grappling with 'the materialist interpretation of history.'[1] But, in a field where one sees the full force of Blake's dictum, a mind *without* literary interests and training is incapable even of perceiving the minute particulars of embodied experience which provide the only data for discussion. The Marxian method applied to a people's culture leaves us with only a few formulæ ; essential life slips through the mesh.

L. C. KNIGHTS.

[1]The materialist hypothesis was not merely a welcome change from Whig teleology, it equipped the historian with some important new methods of diagnosis which have not yet been exploited to the full. One would like to see a *detailed* Marxist interpretation of English political history since the Renaissance.

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A NOTE ON HOPKINS AND DUNS SCOTUS

SOME months ago Mr. Christopher Devlin, S.J., published in ' New Verse ' (No. 14) an all-too-short article on the influence of Scotus on Hopkins. That essay, while throwing much light upon a difficult aspect of the poet's work, was probably, by reason of its compression and learned allusions, caviare to the general. The philosophy of the ' Subtle Doctor ' does not lend itself to a popular exposition ; but having acknowledged a certain indebtedness to Mr. Devlin, and a greater obligation to an enthusiastic Scotist, Mr. Francis Brand, S.J., I shall try to say a little more about the relationship between the Jesuit poet and a Scholastic who in many ways more ' swayed his spirits to peace ' than the official philosopher and theologian of his Order—St. Thomas Aquinas.

We shall consider at greater length that significant ' fragment ' No. 67—' On a piece of music.' The poem is difficult, even obscure, unless it is interpreted in the light of Hopkins's ethical and metaphysical predilections ; and as these predilections are implicit in all his mature poetry we shall be obliged to take a circuitous course through abstractions and then back to their concrete illustrations and tangible incarnations in the poetry.

' On a piece of music ' makes an important distinction between formal beauty or ' the good ' on the one hand, and moral beauty or ' the right ' on the other. (We should note in passing that in another poem, ' To what serves mortal beauty?' (No. 38), natural beauty tells us ' what good means '). But formal beauty is a mode of ' mortal beauty,' whereas moral beauty is immortal beauty—a supernatural state induced by man's willing co-operation with ' God's better beauty, grace.' Now the artistic faculty in man is an immediate activity of his individual nature, and it is necessary at this point to understand how, according to Scotus, the individual nature is determined.[1]

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[1]Authoritative works on Scotus are:

1. Longpré *La Philosophie du B. Duns Scot*, Paris, 1924.
2. de Wulf: *History of Medieval Philosophy*, Vol. II (schematic).

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Every finite being is composed of *ens et carentia*: the intrinsic degree of each thing is its lack of infinity in every natural activity, and the same intrinsic degree in several activities will connect all those activities and make them one individual nature by giving them the same direction. The Scotist principle of individuation embraces the celebrated and subtle *distinctio formalis a parte rei* or formal distinction between the individual nature and the specific or common nature (*e.g.*, *humanitas*). That last formal determination, or *ultima realitas entis*, which restricts the specific form and completes it, is called by Scotus *hæcceitas* (' thisness '). But ' *Essentia creaturæ est sua dependentia ad Deum* ': underlying individuality and the common, specific nature is the universal Nature (a concept ultimately mystical rather that metaphysical), which expresses the unity of all created things.

All created substances, says Scotus, are immediately active, and not merely, as Aquinas says, ' *mediantibus accidentibus.*' (For Aquinas the principle of individuation is *materia signata quantitate* or ' quantified matter,' and matter is the principle of passivity ; but the Scotist *hæcceitas* is an extension of the Aristotelian Form, and Form is the active principle). Individuality then is the direction given to natural activities by the *hæcceitas*: it is the real relation between the creature and God.

Hopkins seized with delight on the Scotist principle of individuation, as we know from those poems in which he makes the activity of a thing a special element in that thing's being. First in ' Henry Purcell ' (1879):

> ' It is the forged feature finds me ; it is the rehearsal
> Of own, of abrupt self there so thrusts on, so throngs the ear.'[1]

And the great stormfowl, to which Purcell is compared,

> ' but meaning motion fans fresh our wits with wonder.'

Even more explicit is No. 34:

> ' Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
> Deals out that being indoors each one dwells ;

[1] *cf.* also the activity of ' Harry Ploughman ' (' Harry bends-look ! ') and ' The Windhover.'

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Selves—goes itself ; *myself* it speaks and spells,
Crying *What I do is me : for that I came.*'

But Hopkins is chiefly concerned with the finite being which has the richest individuality, man:

' Our law says: Love what are love's worthiest, were all known ;
World's loveliest—men's selves. Self flashes off frame and face.'[1]

Physical attributes are subordinate aspects of the total *hæcceitas*, which in rational beings is the spring of all action and is therefore identified with the Will.[2] It is the Will, and not the Intellect, which ' possesses ' a loved object. Intellect is related to the specific, common nature of man ; whereas Will is the expression of individuality. Another important point on which Scotus differs from Aquinas is that the former lays greater emphasis upon the freedom of the Will:[3] in spite of God's essential co-operation in our every action, we are free to choose the objects of our love, the objects we would possess, our τέλος.[4] Thus in each man

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[1]' To What Serves Mortal Beauty.'

[2]' Vital activities cannot be reduced to the plasticity of the body in which they manifest themselves. *They denote a superior perfection.* That is why, in addition to the form of materiality, *every organism has a vital form.*' (de Wulf. *Hist. of Med. Phil.*, p. 80 § 315).

[3]But Verweyn warns us ' dass die Freiheitslehre der beiden Scholastiker nicht als ein Gegensatz zwischen Determinismus und Indeterminismus charakterisiert werden darf . . . ' The truth is stated by Fonsegrive: ' . . . le dominicain met l'accent sur l'intelligence et le franciscain le met sur la volonté sans que ni pour l'un ni pour l'autre l'intime synergie des deux facultés soit détruite.' (*La Phil. du B. Duns Scot.* Longpré. Paris, 1924, p. 195, Notes 2 and 4).
Nevertheless to Longpré:
' Philosophe de la volonté, certes le Docteur Franciscain l'est incomparablement.' (loc. cit., p. 227).

[4]Hereby, I may tell you, hangs a very profound question treated by Duns Scotus, who shews that freedom is compatible with necessity.' (*Letters of G. M. Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, p. 169).

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there is the individual element—*hæcceitas*, Will, spring of action ; and exerting a constant pressure on the Will is the fact that his intellectual and animal nature is really, though mysteriously, united to all men, and indeed to all creation.[1]

In 1875 Hopkins was studying Scotus as a non-official part of his theology course, and we may understand now why he wrote in that year: ' Whenever I took in an inscape of the sea or sky, I thought of Scotus.' In 1879 he wrote to Bridges:

> ' But as air, melody, is what strikes me most of all in music, and design in painting, so design, pattern, or what I am in the habit of calling *inscape* is what I above all aim at in poetry. Now it is the virtue of design, pattern or inscape to be distinctive . . . '

His own nature had led him to attach great importance to individuality in things, to personality in men ; and as an artist he had instinctively anticipated Mr. Ezra Pound's advice to ' make it new.' But distinctiveness or idiosyncrasy in itself has no metaphysical or moral value unless it is, as in the system of Scotus, a valuable link in the ontological argument. Mr. Devlin has already shown[2] that Hopkins's inspirational view of poetic creation roughly corresponds to the Scotist concept that the ' first act ' of knowledge is intuitive, a particular ' glimpse ' into the universal Nature, ' a

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[1]As de Wulf says: ' L'indéterminisme de Scot a été faussement interprété par ceux qui font de la décision volontaire un acte capricieux et irrationnel. En réalite la volition, quoique libre, est raisonnée.' (Longpré, loc. cit.).

As concrete examples of Hopkins's quasi-mystical ' sympathy ' or intuitive love-knowledge we may cite the beginning of 'Brothers' and the following passage from his diary: ' The ashtree growing in the corner of the garden was felled. It was lopped first: I heard the sound and looking out and seeing it maimed there came at that moment a great pang and I wished to die and not see the inscapes of the world destroyed any more.' (*Life*, G. F. Lahey, S.J., p. 129).

[Dare one compare this to the tree-felling incident in Hardy's ' Woodlanders '?].

[2]*New Verse*, No. 14, April, 1935.

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confused intuition of Nature as a living whole ' ; and the vividness of the glimpse depends upon ' its nearness to the individual degree.'[1] Hence to Hopkins an inscape was something more than a delightful sensory impression: it was an insight, by divine grace, into the ultimate spiritual reality. Scotus offered the poet an æsthetic sanction and the priest a moral justification for his inordinate attachment to poetry and the other arts. That is perhaps why Scotus so swayed his spirits to peace. Moreover the very multiplicity of individualities in the created universe was in itself a proof of God's infinity. This idea is expressed in the sestet of the sonnet (No.34) already quoted, in which we see the most complete and successful union of the poet and the Scotist:

> ' I say móre: the just man justices ;
> Keeps gráce: thát keeps all his goings graces ;
> Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is—
> Chríst—for Christ plays in ten thousand places
> Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
> To the Father through the features of men's faces.'

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[1] ' Careful to secure for the understanding the immediate perception of individual reality, Scotus allows, in addition to the abstract and universal knowledge which is *distinct*, a preliminary intuitive knowledge representing a concrete and singular thing in a confused manner (*species specialissima*). This concept of the singular arises at the first contact of the intelligence with that outside it, and is formed simultaneously with the sense knowledge of an object. Is it not in harmony with the logic of the system that this intuitive contact of the mind should precede the reflective contact? There is in the individual being perceived by our senses an internal wealth of entities apart from the work of the mind. Our concepts adapt themselves to these, and are intuitive resemblances of the real. Thanks to this concept of the singular, the understanding enters into direct relation with the extramental world, and perceives existing in their particular state those elements of reality represented in a universal state by ' distinct ' knowledge. Thus the objectivity of intellectual knowledge is accentuated and linked up with the existing and actual world even more than in St. Thomas.' (de Wulf, loc. cit., Vol. 2, p. 81, § 316, English version).

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God the Son assumes *all* Nature ; hence the individual, intrinsic degree of Christ sums up the degrees of all men. The whole sonnet is a poetic statement of the Scotist concept that individual substances, according to the metaphysical richness of their being, make up one vast hierarchy with God as their summit.[1]

Finally, Hopkins saw in Scotism a noble tribute to the dignity of man. It was natural that a poet as sensuous as Keats should agree with the philosopher who emphasized the greater importance of the concrete over the abstractions of the mind and who stressed the close relation between activity and substance ; equally natural that an anthropophile as great as Wordsworth himself should share the Scotist conviction that humanity is too noble a thing to be a mere lump of clay acted upon by outside forces: '*Oportet dignificare naturam humanam quantum possibile.*' He would agree with Scotus that by the Aristotelian doctrine that free will is an imperfection and by the Thomistic that the will is a passive faculty—'*valde vilificaretur natura humana*!' Man must use his freedom of choice to perfect his individual nature 'where it fails,' to give the whole being its true direction Godwards:

'Doff darkness, homing nature knows the rest—'

This brings us naturally back again to the main thesis of the poem 'On a piece of music,' No. 67—the distinction between 'the good' and 'the right.'

'How all's to one thing wrought!
The members, how they sit!'

The work of art, perfect in inscape and outscape, reminds us of the *τυχῆς τέχνην στερχούσης* of the ashtrees described in the poet's early diary.[2] It is an immediate spontaneous activity of the individual nature, or, to return to a more normal phraseology, a faithful expression of personality. But personality involves separation: the artist works by laws of his own fashioning ; as Bacon says: 'he

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[1]See de Wulf, loc. cit.

[2]'. . . some ashes growing in a beautifully clustered "bouquet," the inward bend of the left-hand stem being partly real, partly apparent and helped by *τύχῃ τεχνην στερχούσῃ*' (*Life of G.M.H.*—Lahey ; p. 154).

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must do it by a kind of felicity (as a musician that maketh an excellent air in music), and not by rule.'

> ' Nor angel insight can
> Learn how the heart is hence:
> Since all the make of man
> Is law's indifference.'

Natural beauty is good ; but the moral theme has entered with the word ' heart.' That this word symbolizes man's attitude to divine law we know from a passage about the nun in the ' Deutschland ':

> ' Ah! there was a heart right!
> There was single eye!'

We cannot probe another's secret. Each man is alone with God. Man is a wayward creature, ' unteachably after evil ' ; waywardness or distinctiveness in genius is ' good ' but not necessarily ' right.' By a volitional ' act of love ' man's works must be directed Godwards:

> ' What makes the man and what
> The man within that makes:
> Ask whom he serves or not
> Serves and what side he takes.'

It has recently been said[1] that Hopkins ' wished to achieve the " pure art, morally neutral," in which such interests as corybantic, sadistic images, etc., without being suppressed, can be controlled and philosophically employed.' This may mean that he wished to achieve an art in which moral and æsthetic motives would be present as base and acid are present in a salt ; but if it means (as I think it does) an art which is innocent of, or ' unsullied ' by, moral considerations, then we may cite this poem ' On a piece of music,' ' The Windhover,' etc., and all the letters as evidence

[1]By Mr. Geoffrey Grigson in *New Verse*, No. 14, April, 1935. I admit the element of truth in Mr. Grigson's own main statement. Hopkins's unconscious feeling was often in marked contrast to his controlled conscious thinking. (See Herbert Read: *Form in Modern Poetry*, p. 20).

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to the contrary. There is an uncritical tendency to regard Hopkins as a thinly-disguised modernist in all his acts and attitudes. When he called himself a ' blackguard ' he merely meant that he was not yet a saint. When he said that he always knew in his heart that Walt Whitman's mind was more like his own than any other man's living, he was signalizing a remarkable resemblance in personality (or individual degree), which made both poets express in nearer-to-prose rhythms particular ' glimpses ' of Nature which are at times almost identical. But when he added: ' As Whitman is a very great scoundrel that is not a pleasant confession,' he is deploring the fact that all the make of a Whitman is indifferent to that regulative principle which is the Catholic Church. Hopkins admired in Whitman a natural beauty ' wild and self-instressed ' ·

> ' For good grows wild and wide,
> Has shades, is nowhere none ;
> *But right must seek a side,*
> *And choose for chieftain one.*'

The author of the ' Song of Myself ' had certainly chosen a chieftain ; but his name was not Christ: it was Whitman—or Demos.[1] Therefore although he ' made known the music of his mind,

> Yet here he had but shewn
> His ruder-rounded rind.
>
> Not free in this because
> His powers seemed free to play:
> He swept what scope he was
> To sweep and must obey.'

Hopkins is tackling the ' profound question treated by Duns Scotus ' ; he is trying to reconcile freedom and necessity. Robert Bridges, not realizing, apparently, the ethical significance of this poem, takes the stanza just quoted as the key to the whole:

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[1]Whitman, of course, was far from being a scoundrel: there spoke the super-finical Hopkins, the Character. And we should not forget Whitman's beautiful, poignant poem of Christ and the dead soldiers: ' A Sight in Camp in the Daybreak Grey and Dim ' (Drum Taps).

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> ' No. 67 is the draft of what appears to be an attempt to explain how an artist has not free will in his creation. He works out his own nature instinctively as he happens to be made, and is irresponsible for the result.'

Omit the last clause and this interpretation is true up to the point where the artist brings the will-guided intelligence to bear upon the inscape which he has taken in: he is not responsible for his peculiar mental pattern and rhythm, but he is responsible for their spiritual orientation. So long as the work of a Swinburne or a Whitman was ' morally neutral,' the Jesuit might have said

> ' Therefore this masterhood,
> This piece of perfect song,
> This fault-not-found-with good
> Is neither right nor wrong.'

Unless the poet accepts responsibility for all the moral implications of his work and gives beauty ' back to God,' his work can have no more immortal supernatural beauty

> ' than red or blue,
> No more than Re and Mi,
> Or sweet the golden glue
> That's built for by the bee.'

Corroboration of the above exegesis will be found in that other remarkable fragment, No. 54, ' On the Portrait of Two Beautiful Young People.' Stanza 7 is almost an epitome of the Scotist concept of the *hæcceitas* as expressed in the Will:

> ' Man lives that list, that leaning in the will
> No wisdom can forecast by gauge or guess,
> The selfless self of self, most strange, most still
> Fast furled and all foredrawn to No or Yes.'[1]

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[1]There is an interesting application of this quatrain in Chap. VIII of ' Practical Criticism,' to which it stands as an epigraph. Dr. Richards is saying that the final acceptance or rejection of a poem is an act of the will, a decision of the total personality: ' The personality stands balanced between the particular experience which is the realized poem and the whole fabric of its past experiences

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But in Stanza 5, allegiance to the right regulative principle is clearly stated as the *sine qua non* of a disciplined will:

> ' Where lies your landmark, seamark, or soul's star?
> There's none but truth can stead you. Christ is truth.'

The very richness of Personality's regalia may prove a greater attraction to the Devil: ' favoured make and mind ' and

> ' that most in you earnest eye
> May but call on your banes to more carouse.
> Worst will the best.'

The worst moral diseases attack the finest spirits: and *corruptio optimi pessima*. Of no less a spirit than Whitman or Goethe Hopkins would have asked:

> ' What worm was here
> To have havoc-pocked so, see, the hung heavenward boughs?'

To conclude, Hopkins's preoccupation with the *hæcceitas* as the key to the common nature or *humanitas* (which, as Mr. Devlin says) ' is the source and object of all knowledge in man,' is well illustrated in the Purcell sonnet, the introductory rubric to which states:

> ' The poet wishes well to the divine genius of Purcell and praises him that, whereas other musicians have given utterance to the moods of man's mind, he has, beyond that, uttered in notes the very make and species of man as created both in him and in all men generally.'

W. H. GARDNER.

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and developed habits of mind. What is being settled is whether this new experience can or cannot be taken into the fabric with advantage ' (p. 303). Substitute real action for the vicarious action of a poem and that is what Hopkins meant.

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COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

RECENT PACIFIST LITERATURE

1. *WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT? The case for constructive peace, by Aldous Huxley (Chatto and Windus, 3d.).*
2. *THE CITIZEN FACES WAR, by R. and B. Donington.*
3. *THE ROOTS OF WAR. A Handbook on War and the Social Order.*
4. *VERBATIM SUMMARY of the Evidence presented by the Union of Democratic Control before the Royal Commission on the Private Manufacture of and Trading in Arms (U.D.C., 34 Victoria Street, S.W.1, 6d.).*
5. *THE PRESS CAMPAIGN FOR REARMAMENT (U.D.C., 3d.).*
6. *BRITISH ARMAMENTS AND WORLD PEACE (Cambridge University Anti-War Committee).*

A large part of (2) is given to an account of conscientious objection during the war. Perhaps the most important part, because it contains material which is not easily accessible or collected elsewhere. It demonstrates incidentally to anyone who doubted it that this country has plenty of latent material for a fascism as brutal as the German. Apart from this (1), (2) and (3) cover the same ground—such as the causes of war, the perplexities of the pacifist (what can he do?)—and so on. All three are aware of the same possible lines of action for peace making. The Donington show that conscientious objection, though it achieved a martyr's victory in the war, did nothing to change the course of the war itself, and is not practical politics for a future war. Conscientious objection will be better organized, and the post-war ideology is far more favourable, than in the war or pre-war years, but the probable conditions of a new war will give it no chance to work. Mr. Huxley reaches the same conclusion. Perhaps not

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everyone will concur, but there will be wider agreement for their contention that such a pacifist movement may determine a government's policy against war. The Doningtons also consider the possibility of a movement which might collect two or three million members who would oppose any war not in accordance with the covenant of the League. The case for this is well argued, but it does not appear at the moment practicable, or helpful if achieved. Their main conclusion is that the only short-range policy is to support the League. The objections to the League they state and discuss with justice—an engaging feature of the book is that all pros and cons are introduced and fairly weighed. But the lack of index and bibliography are inexcusable omissions. Especially in view of this quotation from their last paragraph: 'If the plain citizen is to help in the critical decisions that are in the air now and in the next few years, he will have to make himself a very knowledgeable and responsible individual. And that, we believe, is the only possible answer to his question [What can be done?]. He must understand both the long-range problems of education and of the ultimate world unity, and the short-range weapons of defence against war meanwhile.'

Mr. Huxley states the pacifist case 'in terms of a series of answers to common anti-pacifist objections.' They range from the 'most general, based on considerations of biology . . . to the most specific, based on a consideration of contemporary politics.' As a practical programme, the pacifist should work for the calling of a world economic conference (such as members of the present government have vaguely hinted at) to adjust the grievances of Germany, Italy and Japan. 'The greatest sacrifices . . . will have to come from those who possess the most. These sacrifices, however, will be negligible in comparison with the sacrifices which will be demanded from us by another war. Negligible in comparison even with those which are at present being demanded by the mere preparation for another war.' Finally he answers the question of the convinced pacifist who wants 'to do something now.' 'The formation of yet another subscription-collecting, literature-distributing and possibly pledge-signing society is not enough. The Constructive Peace movement must be all these things; but it must be something else as well. It must be a kind of religious order, membership of which involves the acceptance of a certain way of

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life, and entails devoted and unremitting personal service for the cause.' This must take the form of an affiliation of small groups, such as that adopted by the Early Christians, the Quakers, the Wesleyans, the Communists. Mr. Huxley's concluding section will interest those who would not have expected him to write pages which might have come from a good manual of devotion.

The Roots of War, published jointly by the Friends' Anti-War Group and the No More War Movement, is a useful discussion manual. It surveys the causes of war, dismisses the League as a deception in rather a one-sided argument and plumps for mass-resistance. ' Any successful action must be through working-class action.' Though the upper part of the Labour Party is gaga (The official view has veered further and further away from the general strike against war), there is hope in the junior and local sections of the party, according to this book. Like (1) and (2) it ends by trying to answer the question ' What can the individual do?'

The person who is advised by these books will have a programme something like this ; he will:

(a) Join and recruit for the Rev. H. R. L. Sheppard's movement[1] (The Pavement, Walton-on-Thames), which has now 80,000 supporters: because if the hoped-for total of 250,000 is reached the moral effect on Governments should be considerable. Mr. Huxley's proposal.

(b) Give strictly qualified support to the League of Nations idea. An uncritical enthusiasm for it may be even less helpful than Beaverbrook's opposition.

(c) Consider what social and economic changes are desirable. Generally (in schools and so on) encourage development of social impulses at the expense of competitive and ' getting-on ' ethics. And enlist patriotic feeling in this direction, instead of leaving it to be exploited by the press and military-minded.

(e) Diffuse information.

For this last purpose (4), (5) and (6) are valuable. Many potentially responsible people merely do not realize the nature of the present situation. (This is where those Citizenship courses

[1]See *We Say No* (Murray, 3/6).

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should come in). (4) contains the evidence presented before the Arms Commission on behalf of the U.D.C. by Sir William Jowitt with Messrs. McKinnon Wood and J. D. Bernal and Lord Marley as witnesses. When the holding of this enquiry was announced, it was believed that it was to be a sop to the demand stimulated by the U.D.C.'s *Secret International*, a smoke-screen for the Government and whitewash for the makers of armaments. This may have been the intention, but it has not been achieved—though various combines were given assistance to conceal their secrets—thanks to such organizations as the I.L.P., U.D.C., etc. The evidence deals in turn with the steel, chemical and airplane industries. No attempt can be made here to review it in detail, but one piece of information is especially topical in view of the Government's frivolous anti-gas measures. In discussing the efficient type of gas mask desirable, the evidence says:

> 'These gas masks, of the type used as standard for industrial operations and for war purposes . . . are normally retailed to industrial buyers at £2 7s. 6d. each.'

Allowing for a government discount of seven and six, £90,000,000 will be required for masks alone, to say nothing of the cost of maintaining them with supplies of activated carbon. As the Doningtons point out, the cost of providing real defence would run into astronomical figures. And 'The mere scale of the armaments, so far from aiding defence, is a factor in increasing the extent of the menace to the national security; and, since war planes once started cannot . . . be stopped, it will not even help to have 6,000 planes to your enemy's 5,000; his 5,000 will do pretty much the same amount of damage. The mere possession of very large air fleets is a danger in itself.'

But the militarist or re-arming mind is hopelessly unrealist, with the exception of Mr. Baldwin with his continual reiterations that 'in the next war there will be no defence except offence' and 'the next war will be the end of western civilization.'

DENYS THOMPSON.

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THE REVOLUTIONARY SIMPLETON

THE FATE OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES, by Alec Brown (Gollancz, 6/-).

The author tells us towards the end of his book that he is ' reasonably well educated ' ; that he can read and speak four languages ; that he can write easily and well in two, and moderately in two others ; that he can read and even stammer in one or two more ; that he has a ' fair knack of narration ' ; and that he is capable of doing ' various other things.'

The author also tells us that he is a ' trained writer,' and that his study is Man. He is a novelist by profession and two of his novels are mentioned by name. (' Then I wrote the half-good novel *Green Lane* . . . '). I should state at this point that I have not read Mr. Brown's novels, nor have I had the opportunity of following his previous work as a journalist ; I have only the present book to go upon. Now this book—I do not know to what extent Mr. Brown regards it as the product of his ' training '—is written in such tortuous jargon that the only way to review it is to pass some specimen passages in review. In the first place, it is full of inanities: ' We live forwards, by change ; not backwards in a fixture of the past ' (p. 36). Or ' ''Life goes on ''—not only life ; to express it clearer, growth and change go on ' (p. 48). Whenever the author intimates that he intends to introduce a little clarification, it is usually a signal that he is about to become more nebulous than before. He is not wholly devoid of clarity ; but such clarity as he possesses is purely typographical. He has a mania for underlining, thereby securing the reader's attention (it is usually a false alarm) by artificial means ; and he has an irritating habit of helping out his exposition by a series of ' *i.e.*'s ' which not merely fail to clarify the argument but help to burden it with needless redundance. Let me quote a typical example:

> ' In the sixties the export of goods from Great Britain began to be supplemented by the export of capital ; the object of this being to increase the foreign market for machinery—*i.e.*, to supplement the foreign market for manufactured goods by a foreign market for the means of manufacturing goods. The expansion of mere goods production and of the exportation of

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> manufactured goods (consumption goods—*i.e.*, goods usable by ordinary folk) had already outstripped the possible market absorption. Other countries, too, had begun to manufacture. In general terms—we shall examine this in more detail later—since, by the nature of capitalism, the home market for consumption goods was limited, and in the foreign market this phenomenon of market exhaustion repeated itself to such a point that the growth of capital outstripped the available possibility of exporting consumption goods, it ceased to be as profitable for the bourgeoisie of Britain to invest part of the available new accumulation of capital in home industries for the production of goods the folk either at home or abroad could use, as it was to invest it in " colonial and foreign development," the larger part of which was reflected back in increased orders for machinery—*i.e.*, once again, goods ordinary folk cannot use.'

The fact that the writer prides himself on his ability to write makes this passage even worse written that it appears. To say that it is lacking in style, however, would be untrue. There is a sense in which it is highly ' stylistic,' but the style is that of the writer who pretends to be ' matter of fact,' who adopts an attitude of ' no nonsense.' It is an interesting specimen of that familiar modern style which is packed with pseudo-scientific terminology, vague in its attempt at abstract precision, ' sticking to facts,' which, stripped of all but a brute materialistic clothing, are themselves more vague, more abstract, than the vagaries they are meant to replace. Mr. Brown is highly critical of Mr. Wells ; but the writing of this book frequently resembles Mr. Wells at his worst ; and how bad Mr. Wells at his worst can be may be seen from that recent verbal blizzard, *The New America, The New World*.

These are severe strictures, but hardly too severe. When a writer who calls himself an intellectual (though on page 262 he confesses that his ' intellectual effort ' has ' long been given up,' and that he is now ' merely conscious of the class-struggle ') can produce the following: ' Starvation of our people. Robbery of our people. There it is: no fiction of the Utopian Socialists ; no vapour in the brain of the people who are " in the clouds " above real facts ; but a coarse reality . . . ,' we have a right, if not a

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duty, to challenge any claims he may make as to 'training.' There is a distinct 'falsity' about this book. I do not mean that it necessarily conveys erroneous information; I mean that it is the product of a vulgar sensibility. And to condemn the style in which it is written is to condemn the type of mind that wrote it.

In one sense, the book is disappointing because it fails to satisfy the expectations of its title. The subject is one of extreme interest and urgency; and the one service that Mr. Brown has rendered by writing his book is that of showing how such a book should not be written. The argument is simple, and may be stated in a few words, far fewer than Mr. Brown. Capitalism, he maintains, is a system of economic relations whereby the means of production come to be concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. This concentration, which follows a logical sequence, is the result both of a consistent exploitation of the masses and of an illegitimate appropriation of surplus-value. But Capitalism not only exploits the proletariat; it also, though less conspicuously, depresses the middle-classes. It exempts merely those few individuals who by luck or cunning succeed in rising from the middle-classes and themselves becoming exploiters. Such a system is unjust; it starves the many and pampers the few; and it is never wholly free from the threat of crisis and war. But fortunately for the downtrodden proletariat, it is a system which already contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction. The masses have only to organize, to realize their essential community of interest, and the exploiters, now dwindled to a powerful but isolated few, can be overthrown. That, in brief, is the argument. As will be seen, it is the argument of orthodox Marxism, and is nothing more than a combination of the Law of the Concentration of Capital and the Law of Increasing Misery; and it is all in *The Communist Manifesto*. What matters, however, it not that it has been said before (which is irrelevant); nor that it has been said better (which is also irrelevant, though true); but that at the hands of Mr. Brown it becomes the premiss of some doubtful conclusions.

Briefly, Mr. Brown's conclusions are as follows. The greater part of the middle-classes are doomed to continuous depression. It is therefore their interest to associate themselves with the proletariat. But the association must take place *now*, before the middle-classes are wholly 'proletarianized.' The next move is

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to seize the State, ' to expropriate the expropriators ' ; but the seizure will not be permanent unless, in addition to Control, the workers obtain Power. Once in possession of the State, the united working-classes can set about building the Classless Society ; and no doubt this will take time. But when the goal is achieved, history—since history is the history of the State—will be at an end ; we shall have reached the millenium.

The argument is familiar, and its familiarity shows through even Mr. Brown's verbal constrictions. But there are two points that need further elucidation. In the first place, Mr. Brown does not give any clear explanation as to how the bourgeoisie are to be eliminated ; but there are numerous hints to the effect that the removal may be somewhat violent. We read on page 98 that ' control is the result of power,' and that ' with power it is possible to begin the destruction of the whole apparatus of power of both the bureaucracy which runs Capitalism and the armed forces which are its ultimate protection.' A few lines later we read of the ' complete annihilation ' of the ' barrier ' to working-class domination.

This strain of apocalyptic violence, though by no means uncommon to literature of this variety, leads us to be suspicious of the author's claim to be a scientific realist. The primitive mind is that which rejects an explanation in favour of a scapegoat ; and the human impulse to find someone, rather than something, ' to blame ' would appear insatiable. Mr. Brown is a convinced ' rationalist ' ; he became, so he tells us, a ' public sceptic ' at the age of twelve ; and his hostility to organized religion is about as strong as his knowledge of church affairs is weak. But like so many others of his persuasion, he rejects the doctrines of theology only to reintroduce them in a secularized form. He ceases to believe in Heaven only to believe in a heaven on earth ; he denies the existence of the powers of evil only to reintroduce them in the form of exploiting capitalists ; the Chosen People become for him the Chosen Class, or what Mr. John Lewis has recently called The New Christ (the proletariat—I wonder if Marx would have recognized it). He is ' catastrophic ' in the true Marxist sense ; he wants to ' smash ' Capitalism, to destroy the ' whole apparatus ' of bourgeois production, to ' annihilate ' completely the deceivers of the people. And this is ' reality '—or rather, to use a phrase

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more in keeping with Mr. Brown's matter-of-fact temperament, ' coarse reality.'

In the second place, we should like Mr. Brown to have given a more adequate explanation of why, in the coming struggle for power, the middle-classes should join the proletariat. All the arguments in his book could be used, we believe, to justify the opposite thesis: that the proletariat should join the middle-classes. Mr. Brown's conception of the proletariat, like that of many another champion of the ' workers,' is of the most naïve kind. He shares the common view of those who have but the slightest acquaintance with working-class people that the proletariat contains ' the creative forces of society.' The proletariat, we are told, is the ' decisive ' class, whereas the middle-classes are ' betwixt and between,' having no character of their own. Nevertheless, the future of civilization depends upon whether the middle-classes continue to serve the bourgeoisie or throw in their lot with the proletariat ; it is for them to choose and to choose quickly. Now this argument, which is elaborated *ad nauseam*, may be used to prove something quite different. Let us for one moment suppose that the middle-classes are not the ' decisive ' class ; the fact remains that theirs is the ' decisive ' choice. The future of civilization, therefore, would seem to depend less upon the proletariat than upon whether the proletariat is joined by the middle-classes. Without the middle-classes, the proletariat is impotent. I imagine that Mr. Brown would strenuously reject this argument, though upon what grounds I am unable to see. But if we accept it, the main thesis of the book becomes at best inconclusive.

Mr. Brown spends a good deal of his time, and wastes a great deal of ours, attacking Mr. Wells' notion of an Open Conspiracy. It is certainly not the fashion to-day to defend Mr. Wells, and—fashion or no fashion—we do not propose to do so here. But neither is it the fashion to attack Mr. Wells, and that is the sort of fashion we can respect. What is the point of attacking someone who, apart from possessing what Mr. Eliot has described as the most prodigious historical imagination since Carlyle, has nothing of value to say about present-day problems? We have all read Mr. Wells at some time or other with delight ; and we shall often return to parts of his work simply for the purpose of recapturing

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that delight ; but to return to him for any other purpose, even that of refuting him, is suspect. We can never be too sceptical of the kind of refutation which is undertaken as a luxury and not a necessity.

What Mr. Brown appears unable to see is that the arguments used against Mr. Wells can be employed effectively against himself. I do not wish unduly to protract this recital of Mr. Brown's errors, but he invites criticism simply by his repeated claims to be logical and scientific. The reason why he insists that the middle-classes should poin the proletariat is surely that the middle-classes have something to offer which the proletariat does not possess ; something which if it did possess, it would not require the assistance of the middle-classes. This something, I submit, is leadership. Mr. Brown has a great deal to say about the proletariat's ' contribution to civilization ' ; but when we look into the matter, we discover that the contribution of the proletariat is not anything that it does, but something that it is. It contributes merely by being itself ; it *obtrudes*, and that is its justification. But the greatest of Marx's disciples, Lenin and Sorel, had very few illusions about the capacities of the proletariat. Sorel—otherwise a very different type of man from Lenin, who called him a ' worthless muddle-head '—regarded the *size* of the proletariat as compensating for its deficiencies in other respects ; and Lenin, speaking of the future classless society, observed that ' the anticipation of the great socialists that it *will* arrive, assumes neither the present productive powers of labour, *nor the present* unthinking man in the street, capable of spoiling without reflection the stores of social wealth, and of demanding the impossible.' Bukharin, as if to push this line of thought to a logical conclusion, declared that ' the monopoly of education must become the privilege of the proletariat, if the proletariat is to win.' And education implies a teacher.

Now Mr. Wells puts his hopes in those members of the middle-classes who are technical experts. This rouses Mr. Brown to righteous fury, and Mr. Wells comes in for a good deal that he does not deserve in the way of scolding. But Mr. Brown, it seems to me, falls into the same error. In his ' Personal Chapter,' he describes himself as a member of the middle-classes who has nothing to lose and a good deal to gain by throwing in his lot

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with the proletariat ; and the proletariat, he assumes, has nothing to lose and a good deal to gain by receiving him and people like him into its bosom. Why is this? There can only be one answer, and that is that men of his type have something to offer which the working-class sorely needs ; otherwise they are mere encumbrances. The proletariat, as Bukharin points out, needs educating. Mr. Brown and his colleagues can teach it.

Mr. Brown's Politics, as we have abundantly seen, are consistently left-wing. But his economic theory, like that of many other left-wing theorists, is monotonously of the ' right.' I suppose that this is a paradox ; but if so, it is a paradox which resolves itself upon inspection into something quite obvious. The appearance of the latest book by Mr. J. M. Keynes has confirmed our suspicions (which were already sufficiently aroused) that Marxism considered in its economic aspect is not so much a revulsion from classical and academic theory as a development—and a severely logical development—of that theory. For want of a better name, we may call this classico-Marxist economic theory Production Economics ; whereas any economics that is likely to be useful to the present day must be a Consumption Economics. The difference is between an economics founded upon Scarcity and an economics founded upon Abundance ; and it is all the difference in the world. But our Marxist and academic economists have taken a long time to perceive this—if they have perceived it ; and it will take them, and Mr. Keynes among them, a great deal longer to get their views in perspective. That Mr. Brown's conception of economics is exclusively that of the production economists may be observed by parading a few quotations. All this talk about ' " taking over " the control of the " wealth and resources " from the present set of " controllers " and their future use for something called the " common weal " ' is, according to Mr. Brown, mere sentimentalism. (One wonders what *socialism* is coming to). We must eliminate ' not merely the bourgeoisie, but those sections of the middle-classes *which serve the bourgeoisie unproductively*.' (Mr. Brown's italics). Again, we read on page 168 that in the classless state ' ample enjoyment of the necessities of life should be within the reach of all productive workers ; no privileges but those which are based *directly* on productive merit ; no barriers to the expansion of production . . . '

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On page 235, there is reference to ' the conception of society *purely composed of collaborating productive workers*, able . . . to expand production faster and faster.' Finally, on page 276, speaking of lawyers and priests of the middle-classes, Mr. Brown remarks that ' though they are important and prominent groups, they are numerically comparatively negligible, *and anyway unproductive.*' (My italics).

The last quotation is especially worth noting. Mr. Brown never defines what he means by a ' productive worker,' and we would willingly give him the benefit of the doubt but for three crucial passages, of which this is one. Production, according to Mr. Brown, means ' manual production ' ; or rather, manual production is the highest type of production, compared with which all others are inferior imitations. We are not surprised, therefore, to find Mr. Brown defending the Labour Theory of Value. Now the Labour Theory of Value is true, it seems to me, only if you assume its truth to begin with. Mr. Brown bases his case on the fact that without Labour ' nothing can be done ' ; he means, of course, that nothing ' productive ' can be done, because Labour enters into each stage of the productive process. Hence, Labour is indispensable to production and is therefore entitled to the major part of that which is produced. But let us adapt this argument to another factor in the productive process: that of the *entrepreneur*. Without the *entrepreneur*, without the one who ' undertakes ' to set and keep the process going, obviously ' nothing can be done.' He oversees the whole process from beginning to end ; he is indispensable to any industrial system which exhibits a division of labour ; his influence permeates each stage of the productive mechanism. Therefore, we may legitimately assume, the *entrepreneur* has a right to the major part of that which is produced. I must add that I do not think either argument relevant; all I wish to show is that the same logical process can be used for opposite ends.

Now if Mr. Brown regards as a ' productive worker ' anyone who is not an *entrepreneur* (I have refrained from using the word ' capitalist ' because it has a hypnotic effect upon Marxist economists), it is difficult to see how his Society of Co-operative Productive-Workers is ever going to be established. Let us take an analogy from Politics. Democracy, whatever it may prove to

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be in practice, is the rule of the People. But this does not mean that in a democracy there are no persons exclusively devoted to the task of administration. Nor does it mean that since the majority of persons do not 'rule' at all but spend their time obeying rules, these persons—the 'subjects' of a community—have a right to more privileges than the professional administrators. Such a supposition is absurd. There certainly was a time when the 'manual' worker was the worker 'par excellence,' but that was when the problem of Production was still unsolved. To-day it is no longer a problem, since we are potentially capable of producing all that we are likely to need. For the new Consumption Economics there can be no Overproduction, only indiscriminate Distribution; and when I speak of the New Economics I do not mean exclusively the Social Credit system, but any system which contains a similar degree of elementary truth. Mr. Brown's dismissal of Major Douglas in a footnote on page 80 is typical. The Social Credit system is erroneous, it seems, not because it contains any false assumptions or mistaken calculations, but because it is 'an expression of the dividend-drawer divorced from production, with his essentially *consumer* outlook.' There are at least three remarks to be made about this statement. In the first place, the fact that a system of economics—or any other system for that matter—is the 'expression' of a particular economic group within the community has nothing whatever to do with its *validity*. You might just as well condemn Marxism for being the 'expression' of the nineteenth century petit-bourgeoisie. And in the second place, the statement seems to imply that in order to possess the outlook of a 'consumer' you must be divorced from the process of production; in which case, the working-class, whose association with the process of production is of the most intimate kind, should possess an outlook *opposed* to that of the consumer; though Communists like Mr. Brown are for ever insisting that they do not consume enough. I should have thought that the members of the dividend-drawing bourgeoisie, depending as they do upon the continuance of the prevailing system of production, would possess an essentially 'producer' outlook; but since Mr. Brown does not define his terms, we have no alternative but to take them literally, even though this makes nonsense. Finally, we may remark upon the fact that Major Douglas's proposals are condemned for

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being partial to *consumers*. I suppose Mr. Brown means consumers who do not produce ; and he has already told us that consumers who do not produce ought not even to consume. He forgets that the body of persons who consume without producing, and who have no alternative but to do so, is growing year by year ; and that the task of the future is not to turn them into producers, but to make them better consumers ; and to remove for ever the stigma from unemployment. It follows, therefore, that any system of economics which is designed in the interest of the consumer has that much to recommend it ; and that the need to-day is not for political but for economic radicalism. The radicalism of this book is of the kind that has long become conventional. Mr. Brown has still some distance to travel before he can call himself an effective revolutionary.

E. W. F. TOMLIN.

MR. ELIOT AND EDUCATION

ESSAYS ANCIENT AND MODERN, by T. S. Eliot (Faber and Faber, 6/-).

To many who are aware of a great indebtedness to Mr. Eliot every new prose book of his that comes out nowadays is something for a painfully apprehensive approach. They have too much reason for fearing that they will find themselves condemning him by criteria, their way to which, looking back, they recognize as representing in a considerable degree his influence. *Essays Ancient and Modern* is not altogether new ; the dust-jacket may be cited:

> ' This book takes the place of *For Lancelot Andrewes*, which is out of print. The Essay on Thomas Middleton is omitted because it has already been published in *Elizabethan Essays*, and other essays omitted because the author does not think them good enough. Five new essays, not previously collected, have been added.'

The essay on Middleton seems to me certainly no better than the essay on Crashaw that has been suppressed. The new essay on Tennyson seems to me the worst essay in literary criticism that Mr. Eliot has yet published. It opens:

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> 'Tennyson is a great poet, for reasons that are perfectly clear. He has three qualities which are seldom found together except in the greatest poets: abundance, variety and complete competence.'

And what follows does not make these sentences look any more like the utterance of an interested and disinterested mind that knows what it thinks and is concerned to say it as clearly and precisely as possible. The flabbiness to which the air of brisk directness merely calls attention is pervasive. Later on we read:

> 'even the second-rate long poems of that time, like *The Light of Asia*, are better worth reading than most modern long novels.'

—We immediately think of a reverse proposition that would be equally undiscussible and equally profitable.

We have already been told in the first paragraph that Tennyson 'had the finest ear of any English poet since Milton.'[1] In spite of all that comes between we are still surprised (because of that eminently quotable first clause, which will have a currency that Mr. Humbert Wolfe, whose 'interesting essay' Mr. Eliot respectfully dissents from, could not have given it) when we read:

> 'Tennyson is the great master of metric as well as of melancholia; I do not think that any poet in English has ever had a finer ear for vowel sound, as well as a subtler feeling for some moods of anguish.'

But it is not an occasional vulgarity of phrasing that is the worst offence; far worse is the subtlety of statement that disguises critical indolence and gives endorsement to time-honoured critical (or anti-critical) fallacies:

> 'The surface of Tennyson stirred about with his time; and he had nothing to which to hold fast except his unique and unerring feeling for the sounds of words. But in this he had something that no one else had. Tennyson's surface, his technical accomplishment, is intimate with his depths . . .'

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[1] *cf.* a sentence quoted in *Scrutiny* for last December: 'Palgrave's chief and best guide was Tennyson, on whose fine ear the metres of the 'metaphysicals' must have grated as did those of his friend Browning . . .'

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If that last sentence means anything, either Tennyson's depths are not those of a great poet, or Mr. Eliot ought not to have been content to talk so much, so redundantly and so loosely about Tennyson's technical accomplishment as a matter of a fine ear for vowel sound and an unerring feeling for the sounds of words. Actually, Tennyson's feeling for the sounds of words was extremely limited and limiting: the ear he had cultivated for vowel sound was a filter that kept out all 'music' of any subtlety or complexity and cut him off from most of the expressive resources of the English language. To bring English as near the Italian as possible could not have been the preoccupation of a great English poet, however interesting the minor poetry that might come of it. The term 'metric' that Mr. Eliot has sponsored seems calculated to rehabilitate the discredited fallacies of the prosodic approach.

These fallacies are peculiarly hard to shift, the incapacities associated with the phrase 'fine ear' are inveterate, in the normal product of a classical education. Why this should be so Coleridge virtually explains in the first chapter of *Biographia Literaria*; and Wordsworth, in the following lines, suggests the condition of a classical training's being something one may properly be concerned to preserve:

> In fine,
> I was a better judge of thoughts than words,
> Misled in estimating words, not only
> By common inexperience of youth,
> But by the trade in classic niceties,
> The dangerous craft of culling term and phrase
> From languages that want the living voice
> To carry meaning to the natural heart;
> To tell us what is passion, what is truth,
> What reason, what simplicity and sense.

—The training in Latin and Greek must not be made a substitute for training in English. It would seem to be axiomatic that if one does not bring an educated sensibility from one's literary studies, what one brings away should not be called a humane education. And it would seem to be equally axiomatic that it is only in one's own language that one's sensibility can, in the first place, be

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educated. And the result of the assumption that if Latin and Greek are looked after the rest will look after itself is the cultivated classic who thinks that Mr. Belloc writes good prose and that it is a mark of a liberal good taste to account Miss Dorothy L. Sayers Literature. The recognition that English must be looked after involves the recognition that it must be looked after at the university level—or at any rate that it is not merely and patently stupid to suppose so.

In Mr. Eliot's essay on *Modern Education and the Classics*, however, we read:

> 'The universities have to teach what they can to the material they can get: nowadays they even teach *English* in England.'

Merely that. Or rather, a little further on Mr. Eliot adds this (having dismissed *economics* and '*philosophy*, when divorced from *theology*'):

> 'And there is a third subject, equally bad as training, which does not fall into either of these classes, but is bad for reasons of its own: the study of *English Literature* or, to be more comprehensive, the literature of one's own language.'

Of these reasons Mr. Eliot says nothing whatever.

To those who have been working at the problems of a modern humane education, and discussing the place of English in it, he must sound ill-mannered and ill-tempered. For of such work and such discussion he cannot be altogether ignorant. And he must know that conclusions opposite to his own have been come to by persons ostensibly better qualified to conclude and to pronounce. At any rate, one may suggest that he ought now, in common decency, to read the official Report on *The Teaching of English in England*,[1] or, more simply, Mr. George Sampson's *English for the English*, and tell us why he disagrees.

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[1]*The Teaching of English in England: Being the Report of the Departmental Committee appointed by the President of the Board of Education to inquire into the Position of English in the Educational System of England.* (1921). H.M. Stationery Office, 1/6 net.

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When we re-read his essay to discover what he himself advocates we still find him, for all the *ex cathedra* manner, curiously vague, general and negative. He dissociates himself in large terms from all kinds of company, but for his account of what he positively wants gives us nothing but this:

> 'It is high time that the defence of the classics should be dissociated from objects which, however excellent under certain conditions and in a certain environment, are of only relative importance—a traditional public-school system, a traditional university system, a decaying social order—and permanently associated where they belong, with something permanent: the historical Christian Faith.'

It would be very interesting indeed to be told just how, in Mr. Eliot's view, the classics are permanently associated with the historical Christian Faith, and what are the conclusions for education—just what and how, for instance, the monastic teaching orders he desiderates would teach. But we cannot really believe that Mr. Eliot will ever tell us more. If he does not, however, we cannot take his interest in education very seriously.

There is, in fact, something very depressing about the way in which, nowadays, he brings out these orthodox generalities, weightily, as substitutes for particularity of statement, rigour of thought and various other virtues we have a right to expect of him. We no longer expect them, unfortunately. So that when, writing on *Religion and Literature*, he starts with the proposition that

> 'Literary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint,'

we do not expect to be able to read with the sympathy that ought to be possible what follows. We expect to find that, in spite of anything that may be said or implied to the contrary, we are being offered something as a *substitute*. 'We' stands for readers who agree, or rather urge, that serious literary criticism leads outside itself and are intent on following it, but do not know of any fixed base 'outside' from which to move in the opposite direction. In the nature of the case we cannot, as Mr. Eliot himself has pointed out, hope to engage conclusively in argument with those who have

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such a base. But, however little they may be impressed, we have to insist that what looks to us like weak thinking, failure in critical disinterestedness or courage, bad judgment, and so on, we must judge as such, and that a 'definite ethical and theological standpoint' is the reverse of recommended to us when its adoption has been accompanied by a decline in the virtues we can recognize.

The essay on *Religion and Literature* is too general to have much force for any readers but those who agree with Mr. Eliot already (to such indeed it is addressed). The rest of us must take it in relation to other things in the book—such things as the essays on Tennyson and education. And we in any case find it odd that Mr. Eliot should have had to learn from Mr. Montgomery Belgion (see the footnote on p. 100) that the fiction we read may affect our behaviour to our fellows, and odd that he should be able to refer to 'such delightful fiction as Mr. Chesterton's *Man Who Was Thursday* or his *Father Brown*' and say: 'No one admires and enjoys these things more than I do.' Of Mr. Chesterton Mr. Eliot himself once remarked that his cheerfulness reminds us not so much of St. Francis as of a bus-driver slapping himself on a wintry day to keep warm. That will seem to most educated and sensitive people a very kind way of indicating the level of Mr. Chesterton's art and propaganda.

F. R. LEAVIS.

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ONTOGENETIC CRITICISM

IN DEFENCE OF SHELLEY AND OTHER ESSAYS, by Herbert Read (Heinemann, 10/6).

This book in itself is of no particular interest, but deserves notice if only because Mr. Read has acquired something of a reputation and in the long essay which provides the title claims to be considered as a critic. He undertakes to redress the balance of opinion about Shelley, to mediate, in fact, between Professor Dowden and Professor Eliot. The latter, as was noticed in a recent number of *Scrutiny*, couched his objections in unfortunate terms, seeming to rest his low opinion of Shelley on his ideas and the difficulty of believing in them. To take up the challenge was to condone the offence to literary criticism and to extend it. Mr. Read, however, seems to have abondoned literary criticism proper. At least he suggests that the attack on Shelley through his ideas is excellent critical strategy, for ' a frontal attack on his poetry would not be very effective. You may say that this poem or that poem is bad, but however many reasons you may bring forward to support your opinion, an opinion and a personal one it remains.'

It would be unfair to Mr. Read to suggest that this is the whole of his approach. His ' first concern ' he admits must be ' to vindicate the high value of Shelley's poetry.' He begins characteristically with Shelley's attitude to his poetry. But when this is over he proceeds to the business of sifting and rejecting and finds as one would expect, ' there is not a single long poem which does not suffer from lack of those most precious qualities of precision and objectivity.' (He has sufficient perception to dismiss the *Cenci*). But just as Mr. Read is about to take up this narrowed ground and begin his defence he announces, ' But first I think it necessary to establish the psychological type to which Shelley belonged.' It is evident that a frontal defence seems to the author equally ineffective. In justification of this deviation we find: ' the only kind of criticism which is basic . . . is ontogenetic criticism, by which I mean criticism which traces the work of art in the psychology of the individual and in the economic

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structure of society.' 'A complete understanding of the poet's personality is the best basis for the appreciation of his poetry.'

This is more than a plea for the priority of biography over literary criticism. The common facts are not enough. What is required is the establishment of the poet's psychological type. An arduous if not impossible task one would think when we consider that the dead poet never went into the consulting room, and even if he had the critic qua critic could not do the work of the analyst. But Mr. Read cheerfully admits, 'exact psychological analysis of a dead poet is beyond the scope of literary criticism.' Nevertheless it appears that a superficial survey of Shelley's life—an admitted outline—gives the main features of an abnormal state whose causes have been discovered by Dr.Trigant Burrow—who, to judge from these extracts, is not himself above confounding the boundaries of his science and those of literary criticism. It is admitted that only a general correspondence between the material and the theory can be made out by the literary critic. Yet 'it has enabled us to establish beyond any reasonable doubt that Shelley belonged to a definite psychological type.' We find Mr. Read calling this method, 'justifying Shelley in reason and on a basis of psychological truth.' This is the lick-spittle attitude to Psychology with a vengeance.

The fallacies and dangers of this approach are obvious enough. They might be overlooked if it results in the establishment of the maturity and permanent worth of Shelley's poetry. But even Mr. Read does not claim this. He 'proves' Shelley was neurotic (though it is interesting to note that in an earlier book he was aware of the platitudinous point that 'the critic could determine the neurotic element by general critical principles.' And the whole tenor of his argument in *Reason and Romanticism* suggests that then he was far from his present truckling to Psychology. Though, no doubt, this is made necessary by the change from a view similar in some respects to that of Mr. Eliot to Ontogenetic criticism).

We may note in passing that for Mr. Read all artists are neurotic, though he comes to this conclusion by taking as his norm the average man who is (according to Mr. Read) a repressed homosexual but won't admit it, whereas the distinction of Shelley was that he was a neurotic who knew that he was a neurotic.

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There is something attractive in ontogenetic criticism. It seems to have none of the rigours and discipline of either psychological science or literary criticism. Yet from the brevity of the pendant to the essay which contains the despised type of criticism (mere statement of opinions) we must assume that the author supposes he has fulfilled his claim to have established the maturity and permanent worth of Shelley's best poetry. For the rest we get little but bare statements. 'The *Defence* is the profoundest treatment of the subject in the English language.' (We learn that the great Dr. Burrow is at times merely repeating truths which Shelley had already expressed). '*Prometheus Unbound* is an epic, the greatest expression ever given to humanity's desire for intellectual light and spiritual liberty.' 'The whole tendency of Shelley . . . is towards a clarification and abstraction of thought . . . thought so tenuous and intuitive that it has no visual equivalent.' In 'the supreme type of Shelley's poetic utterance'—*Life of Life*—'every image fades into air, every outline is dissolved in fire. The idea conveyed—the notional content—is almost negligible; the poetry exists in the suspension of meaning . . . in other words, such poetry has no precision.' His final conclusion follows: 'All great poetry, said Shelley in reference to Dante, is *infinite*; and that is the final quality.' ('Infinity,' Mr. Read once reminded us, 'is a dangerous word in art no less than in philosophy, and we should do well to avoid it').

There is something absurd and unreal about the whole essay; and when we find later in the book with reference to Hopkins that he had 'that acute and sharp sensuous awareness essential to all great poets' we have a right to suspect Mr. Read of not deserving the reputation of a responsible critic. If there were any doubt of this the critical flabbiness displayed in the other essays of this book would serve to dispel it.

H. A. MASON.

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ENGLISH NOVELISTS AND HIGHER REVIEWERS

THE ENGLISH NOVELISTS, edited by Derek Verschoyle (Chatto and Windus, 8/6).

'It's purpose is . . . to trace the *development* of English fiction by discussing the writers who have made the most important contributions to its growth—to provide, as it were, a critical genealogy of the best fiction that is being written in the English language to-day.' So writes the editor in a brief introduction which does nothing more than state a purpose yet is apparently one of the twenty chapters forming this 'Survey of the Novel by Twenty Contemporary Novelists.' And there is indeed a need for such a book, though I doubt if many people, or even all the contributors to this one, would on reflection feel the want to have been in any degree supplied. Not to mention that the choice of subjects, the editor's responsibility, is capricious in inclusion as well as exclusion—for of course he had the right to make his own choice provided he had justified it by at least an appearance of integration, which there isn't; there is also the capriciousness of allotment, which suggests the question (not raised in the Introduction): On what principle were the subjects dealt out? Mr. Garnett presumably was allowed first choice and picked Richardson, Fielding and Smollett because he could scribble disjointed notes on them in a railway carriage and call it a study—I deduce this from the result. With two or three exceptions no more striking justification for anyone's being appointed to write on anyone is discernible.

Yet the book is intended to be more competent than a one-man survey: 'each of the chapters is the work of a living English or American novelist who is also a critic and qualified by a specialist's knowledge to assess authoritatively the contribution made to the development of the novel by a particular predecessor.' The theory, so admirable, bears little relation to actuality. Of course one quite realizes that the big guns—Joyce, Forster, Woolf, Myers, Maugham, Huxley—probably weren't available, and that Mr. Verschoyle has had to beat up his novelist-critics where he could find them. With the exception of Mr. Muir, a critic everyone must respect, and Mr. O'Faoláin, whose novels are highly estimable,

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and Mr. Bates, a genuine minor talent, there is no one in the bunch who has achieved a serious level of distinction in either fiction or criticism. Having found by inquiry that my ignorance is not in this respect anything like unique I don't mind confessing that I could not name any novel by most of these collaborators, and I doubt if, in their other capacity, they would be described by most intelligent readers as anything but consistently incompetent reviewers (not incompetent merely by an ideal standard of novel-reviewing, but by the standard habitually achieved by *The New Republic*). I mention this both to account for the failure of the book, and to emphasize a distaste for these inflated editorial and publishing claims which are getting so insufferable (of course, they defeat their own purpose). Far from being the ' twenty of the most distinguished contemporary novelists ' claimed, they prove to be such novelists as Mr. E. F. Benson who has a faithful Boots' Library public of the older generation, Mr. Prokosch who published his first novel the other day, and Mr. MacNeice who, we are informed in a footnote, has written his fiction under a pseudonym ; and after all any literate person can produce a work of fiction, and one novel generally leads to another . . .

The result is what you might expect, a collection of scratch essays on unrelated novelists. Undergraduate essays are provided by Mr. Prokosch (on Chaucer), Mr. Fedden (on Peacock) and Mr. Calder Marshall (on Sterne), the first two nice and the last nasty—having neither information nor critical capacity and being above the naïve enthusiasm of the other two, Mr. Calder Marshall gives a display of offensive attitudes. Miss Bowen prattles about Jane Austin's characters. Miss Macaulay has at least taken the trouble to furnish the reader with as much information about Lyly and Sidney as he could get from a text-book and he will certainly share her implied opinion that it was not worth the trouble since her subjects contributed nothing permanent and led nowhere. I cannot see that Mr. Pritchett gets any further than restating in the modern idiom parts of Leslie Stephen's far more useful essay on Defoe (*Hours in a Library*, First Series). Mrs. Carswell contributes as good a balanced essay on Butler the novelist as could probably be written, though she doesn't come right out and tell us what *The Way of All Flesh* did contribute to subsequent novelists' outfits. An indulgence in ample general claims and a refusal to specify

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or mention the name of any novelist other than the one to which the critic is committed is a characteristic feature of the whole book. Mr. L. A. G. Strong gives some advice to the novice on tackling Joyce. The two distinguished essays are by Mr. Graham Greene on Henry James and Mr. Edwin Muir on Scott— perhaps on rereading they don't appear so tremendous, because both have obvious limitations of a serious kind, but when you get to them in due sequence they affect you as first-rate simply because they suggest a standard of relevance and insight that the rest of the book doesn't approach. Mr. Greene concentrates on analysing the nature of Henry James's moral universe and tracing its roots in the novelist's own being, with so much success that only a bigot will find altogether absurd his claim that James is ' as solitary in the history of the novel as Shakespeare in the history of poetry.'

These critics then adopt strikingly different approaches to their subjects: we are given revaluations, apologias, biographical sketches, frivolous personal impressions, first fine careless raptures ; there is no focus, no common conception of a shared task, no one takes seriously the promise to exhibit ' the *development* of English fiction,' and any reader not already able to see his own way through the subject would be left with a bewildered impression that English fiction didn't develop but that novels just got written and journalists wrote about them whenever a publisher wanted a book on the novel.

You do get to wondering what reader they can have in mind. The editor specifies ' a reader reasonably well acquainted with the outlines of the subject and appreciative of good criticism.' But his collaborators seem not to agree with him, for Mr. Benson's elementary biographical account of ' The Brontës ' would be useless to the first half-reader. And the other half would be insulted by the assumption that he belonged to the *John o' London's* public ; yet for whom else can such stuff as this be intended (and it is representative of much in this ' gifted collaboration ')? :

> ' Though primarily concerned with values, the novels [of Forster] can be read simply for their stories, which are excellent, and for their humour, which is inextricably woven into their texture.' [E. B. C. Jones, ' E. M. Forster and Virginia Woolf '].

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It will be unhelpful to the first kind of reader and a cause of scorn to the second that the novelist-critics are engaged unwittingly in destroying each others values. How far the editor, or any editor, could have remedied some of these points is an interesting problem. No doubt he could have seen to it that the book was less amorphous, less atomic, that co-ordination of at least an elementary kind was achieved—for instance, to take a small and obvious point, when separate essays are devoted to Peacock and Huxley the fact that Huxley's first batch of novels owe their character to a combination of Peacock with *South Wind* should be noted if not enlarged upon. He might at least have got them to discuss the project round a table, so that they could have come to some agreement about the indispensable critical tools, the kind of approaches to the novel which are profitable and those which are not, what the 'development' of fiction means and how a novelist's contribution to it may be estimated, what a novel's function is or has been at different periods, and similar questions which will naturally occur to the reader of the proposed book. Far from thinking these questions preliminary to their undertaking, most of the contributors seem to function at a level below that at which such questions occur. The editorial contribution to the volume might usefully have been an explicit discussion of these subjects, by way of clearing the ground. With such a backing Mr. Bates and Mr. O'Faoláin, who show themselves struggling pathetically to cultivate their plots with bare if willing hands, might have achieved something. Without it there is no reason why a lot of space that has to be filled somehow shouldn't be devoted to 'the half-heartedness about sexual love' in the novels of V. Woolf and E. M. Forster, though that *pudeur* can hardly be a factor in the development (or otherwise) of the twentieth century novel.

To desiderate this backing is to go much further and demand a different milieu, a literary world in which there shall be 'standards of criticism' and critics capable of realizing them in practice—evidently not the literary world we have at present, for these collaborators and their co-mates are the people who control our higher reviewing. That, from another point of view, is why it is possible to produce such a book as this: it is sure to get good reviews.

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To argue that because they aimed at producing a popular survey they could not afford to go in for such subtleties as I have demanded is fallacious ; it takes a first-class critic to work profitably at a popular level because the only popular criticism which is of any use is that which has behind it a recognition of complexities. (An instance is Mr. Eliot's broadcast talks on seventeenth century poetry, reprinted in *The Listener*, March 12th, 1930, *et seq.*). Yet most of these writers exhibit a striking inability to grasp any critical idea. Take Professor Dobrée's essay on Meredith. He admires Meredith, and sensing him to be in need of defence is unable to rest at simple admiration. He works at what might be called a sub-critical level (I take him as typical). He is actually unable to realize what the objections to Meredith consist in, and thinks he is defending Meredith by alleging that he is now unpopular with the serious reading-public because people don't care to make the *effort* required for reading him. He asserts that Meredith is disliked because he ' steadfastly refused to offer the popular lure ' of ' an appeal to the emotions ' and concentrated instead on ' intelligence.' This engaging innocence does not do much for Meredith since our objections take the form of a criticism precisely of that intelligence, of the quality of Meredith's mind and ideas—a conviction that Meredith's display of ' intense intellectual activity ' is nearly as hollow and spurious when presented in fictions as when served up in the guise of criticism. Prof. Dobrée takes the Idea of Comedy and the ' civilizing laughter ' theory at its own valuation.[1] No one who finds Meredith unimpressive will be softened by being assured that ' the moment we turn to him from the most belauded works of to-day . . . what a relief we experience! Here we are among people who matter . . . their problems are our problems, their experience, their conclusions mean something.' I suggest that any reader other than Professor Dobrée tries turning to *The Egoist*, Meredith's best work, merely from *The Portrait of a Lady* (which contains among other things a comparable study of masculine egotism in contact with a fine female intelligence), and sees how Meredith's ' lightning-flashes of wit,' ' consummate art,' ' delicious ' fun and ' exacting intellect ' look then.

[1]An analysis of this essay was published in *Scrutiny*, Vol. I, No. 4.

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Fortunately Mr. Muir's essay (on Scott) in the same book gives us a standard by which Professor Dobrée's exercise in defending a much-criticized novelist may be measured. Mr. Muir first states the case against Scott more comprehensively and forcefully perhaps than any of Scott's detractors could, then, as a way of doing justice to the novelist's actual achievement, proceeds to explain Scott's admitted failure to justify his creative talents. He does so by referring to the cultural deadness of Scotland and Edinburgh at that time, and though he has no space for illustrative proof we are willing to take his case on trust, so impressive is Mr. Muir's exhibition of critical conscience and discernment. Yet Mr. Muir, as I have said, is almost alone in his intelligence and his ability to make use of it. Far more typical is Mr. Quennell, who, writing on Lawrence and Huxley, commits himself to the opening statement that 'Lawrence was a writer of genius but muddle-headed; Huxley, supremely intelligent, appears to suffer from the very complexity of his mental apparatus.' The reader will perhaps, waiving the general point whether genius is not always a matter of more than common integration and so incompatible with muddle-headedness, register the objection that Lawrence's novels reveal one of the keenest and clearest minds of his time, while it is not necessary to be a fanatical admirer of Lawrence's to find Mr. Huxley's intelligence neither supreme nor fatally complex. Mr. Quennell, that is, like Professor Dobrée, places himself as not being a competent critic. His account of one of Lawrence's best things, *St. Mawr*, bears no relation to the experience derived from it by anyone qualified to talk about Lawrence. It is natural that he should honestly see nothing whatever in Lawrence (whom Mr. Forster has declared to be 'the greatest imaginative novelist of our time') but a descriptive writer of anthologizable pieces, while concluding of Huxley 'What course Mr. Huxley's destiny will now assume is one of the most interesting literary problems of the present decade.' (It was pardonable to have thought so until the publication of *Point Counterpoint*, but not afterwards.) Yet Mr. Quennell is not being perverse or wilfully stupid; he is merely what nature and environment and the habit of unchallenged complacency have made him and most of his colleagues in the literary reviewing line.

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It is unfair then to put all the blame on the editor, or on the method he chose. It is improbable that a much more successful book might have been produced by choosing some different novelist-critics, or by adopting a scheme less obviously compartmental—say, one in which the subject was cut up the other way so that we had Mr. Herbert Read on The Philosophical Novel from Milton[1] to Myers and Miss Jones on The Sex-Novel from Aphra Behn to D. H. Lawrence. *The English Novelists* is the same kind of cultural phenomenon as Mr. Grigson's recent collaborative undertaking *The Arts To-day*, though the collocation is unjust to the spirit of the former, which is decent and generous. Collaborative literary criticism is bound to fail in an age where there are no commonly accepted standards of criticism unless the collaborators work in accordance with a particular discipline. This discipline has been provided in our time by critical reviews, but they have not belonged to the literary racket ; at least, the only successful undertakings of the kind I can recall where individually vital minds are visibly working in ' the common pursuit of true judgment ' are *Scrutinies I* (Wishart) and *Determinations* (Chatto and Windus).

In *The English Novelists* the only essays that can be felt to advance anything are Mr. Muir's and Mr. Greene's, the one limiting itself to an examination of the values implicit in James's novels, the other to a suggestion that Scott's artistic shortcomings are explicable by his cultural background. Is is rash to deduce that these are the most likely methods to advance a criticism of the novel? Indeed anyone who has given serious thought to the matter is likely to have concluded that the historical method has no doubt an academic justification and the analytic method (type Percy Lubbock's) a use for the intending novelist, while gossip about characters can serve the purposes only of the drawing-room and the sick-bed ; but that where the profit of literary criticism is concerned novels had best be regarded on the one hand as ' storehouses of recorded values ' and on the other as at the same time indexes to and products of our cultural history. That is why *The English Novelists* is not recommendable as the much-needed survey of English fiction: it is not a vicious book, it is simply irrelevant.

Q. D. LEAVIS.

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[1] *Paradise Lost* having as much claim to be a novel as *Troilus and Criseyde*.

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MR. E. M. FORSTER

ABINGER HARVEST, by E. M. Forster (Arnold, 12/6).

Apart from the Clarke Lectures, reprinted as *Aspects of the Novel*, and the memoir of Lowes Dickinson, this is the only book Mr. Forster's eager public has been given since *A Passage to India*, and it is a disappointing book. It is composed of reprinted essays, reviews, articles, etc., divided into sections: one is of literary criticism, another about the East, another on aspects of contemporary England, and one of essays mostly in the popular historical manner (née Strachey) on figures of the Past. The publishers tells us ' the range of outlook is even wider ' here than in Mr. Forster's previous work, but even his greatest admirers will hardly find anything more than a casual re-statement of Mr. Forster's outlook, split up as it were under a spectroscope. *Abinger Harvest* ought to be an occasion for some critic to make a revaluation of the novels too. However, we must be content here with summarizing what this volume alone shows.

It is a mixture of autobiography and criticism. What it chiefly does is to furnish a key to Mr. Forster's peculiar poise, that poise which constitutes the individuality of his novels and from which his characteristic irony springs. Under the spectroscope it is seen to be a balance between a critical and a charming stance. He is gifted with impulses in both directions, and, hovering as he necessarily does between the serious and the playful, this makes him unduly concerned to be whimsical. He is often here merely playful and then he tends to become a bore (*e.g.* last half of the group of sketches called ' Our Diversions '), or personal in the worst sense. His weakness, felt in the novels as an uneasy wobble in some of the ironic effects, is here revealed as a frequent inability to decide which he wants to be—critical or charming. You get the impression that he is positively unable to resist following out a whimsical train of thought, whatever the business in hand. ' My Wood ' is an instance of turning this habit to profit by the use of a serious overtone, but it stands almost alone on this level. Generally his poise in these essays is unstable, he seems, as so rarely in the novels, to be uncertain what he intends to convey or where he means to alight (hence perhaps his liking for Ronald

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Firbank, who will remain a tiresome fribble to most of us). 'A Flood in the Office' shows a characteristic surrender to the easier current; it starts from a dispute between two eminent engineers about the irrigation of Egypt and continues, at a tangent, about Father Nile. Mr. Forster sees from the corner of his eye the real significance of the dispute—the eternal antipathy between the disinterested intelligent man and stupidity allied with vested interests—but it is not the spectacle of integrity struggling to make its voice heard that arrests his imagination: it is the whimsical fancies suggested by 'the unique mass of water.' Of course it makes a more amusing essay this way. The objection is that the consistently whimsical outlook has the effect of making any other appear priggish—exactly as *Punch* does, which Mr. Forster very feelingly denounces on other grounds. And you do get the impression that Mr. Forster is disinclined to risk being thought too serious, he takes so much care to elicit the 'How amusing' response.

The literary criticism carries us a step further in our analysis. The intuitions are good, there are striking flashes of discernment (some of the critical stuff, such as the essay on Sinclair Lewis, is better than anything in *Aspects of the Novel*), but he doesn't seem to know how to consolidate. As in that book, it is amateur criticism; there is some kind of mental habit that prohibits discipline and sustained effort. The amiably whimsical-personal approach is not made to seem justified as a profitable mode of literary criticism: essays like that on T. S. Eliot are so inadequate that it is surprising that Mr. Forster should have thought them worth reprinting. The brief note on Conrad makes the radical criticism of this novelist who has been written and lectured about with so little profit:

> 'This isn't an æsthetic criticism, nor a moral one. Just a suggestion that our difficulties with Mr. Conrad may proceed in part from difficulties of his own. What is so elusive about him is that he is always promising to make some general philosophic statement about the universe and then refraining with a gruff disclaimer . . . These essays [*Notes on Life and Letters*] do suggest that he is misty in the middle as well as at the edges, that the secret casket of his genius contains a vapour rather than a jewel . . . '

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And again on Ibsen, how acute, how just:

> 'Although not a teacher he has the air of being one, there is something in his method that implies a message, though the message really rested on passing irritabilities, and not on any permanent view of conduct or the universe . . . Moral ugliness trespasses into the æsthetic . . . Poetry might perhaps be achieved if Ibsen's indignation was of the straight-hitting sort, like Dante's. But for all its sincerity there is something automatic about it, he reminds us too often of father at the breakfast table after a bad night, sensitive to the defects of society as revealed by a chance glance at the newspaper, and apt to blame all parties for them indiscriminately. Now it is the position of women that upsets father, now the lies people tell, now their inability to lie, now the drains, now the newspaper itself, which he crumples up, but his helpers and servers have to retrieve it, for bad as are all political parties he must really see who got in at Rosmerholm.'

Yet you feel he is not wholly aware of the force of his criticisms, for he always proceeds to shy away from the point he has made so convincingly and go back on himself—generally out of benevolence.

You go on to conclude that Mr. Forster is not so adequate a critic as he might be—as he ought to be, judging by his natural endowments. His blind spots are particularly instructive; they seem to be created by a social environment whose influence would repay investigation. There is the section of essays on The Past. They have none of Lytton Strachey's hateful qualities— the cheap irony, the vulgar prose effects, the assumption of superiority to his historical puppets—but it is significant that he should be sufficiently an admirer of Strachey's to try his hand at this genre, and sad that he should have been encouraged to think the attempts worth republishing. [But no doubt many will find them delicious.] In these circumstances his personal touch deserts him. 'Presently the old mistress [Hannah More] will ring a bell, Louisa will fail to answer it, there will be horror, disillusionment, flight, the Industrial Revolution, Tolstoy, Walt Whitman, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb.' This, along with *The Common Reader* 2nd Series from which it might have come, shows the unfortunate meeting-ground of

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three writers. It is distressing to see so distinguished a writer sinking to this. From this volume posterity will do some deducing about Mr. Forster's background: he feels amiably towards the submerged layers below him (' Me, Them and You,' and there other indications of a desire, creditable rather than effective, to gear in with the great world) ; and is critical of those aspects of his economic class which his circle have agreed to consider targets (*e.g.*, ' " It is different for me " '), but his most successful achievements here are in a very small way (*e.g.*, ' The Doll Souse ' and ' The Scallies '). There isn't much appearance of sharply-felt first-hand criticism. Everything points to an uncritical taking-over of group-values. For instance, he boldly confesses to being one of the highbrow minority who can ' make fun ' of Wembley, while the next essay displays him revelling in the deliciousness of Mickey Mouse and Co. ; anyone who has observed a highbrow film audience relaxing from the effort required to appreciate Russian or surrealist films and preparing to really enjoy themselves when the Walt Disney turn follows must feel this a worthier subject for an ironical pen. A satirist, to command our respect, ought to be aware of his blinkers as well as of his tether. Thus it seems at least somewhat arbitrary to assume that the British Empire is ridiculous whereas Mr. Clive Bell isn't ; posterity's Bloomsbury (not very long hence) may judge otherwise.

Where suitable subjects occur, when his critical abilities are able to function on important topics that are also congenial, Mr. Forster produces his best work. The best section in this volume is that on The East, and the best essay in it on ' The Mind of the Native Indian State.' This is not merely whimsical, merely charmingly witty, but witty to a serious purpose ; it is responsible:

> ' The Princes have studied our wonderful British Constitution at the Chiefs' Colleges, and some of them have visited England and seen the Houses of Parliament. But they are personal rulers themselves, often possessing powers of life and death, and they find it difficult to realize that the King Emperor, their overlord, is not equally powerful. If they can exalt and depress their own subjects at will, regard the State revenue as their private property, promulgate a constitution one day and ignore it the next, surely the monarch of Westminster can do as much or more. This belief colours all their intercourse with the

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> Government of India. They want to get through or behind it to King George and lay their troubles at his feet, because he is a king and a mighty one, and will understand. In the past some of them nourished private schemes, but to-day their loyalty to the Crown is sincere and passionate, and they welcomed the Prince of Wales, although his measured constitutionalisms puzzled and chilled them. Why did he not take his liegemen aside and ask, in his father's name, for the head of Ghandi upon a charger? It could have been managed so easily. The intelligent Princes would not argue thus, but all would have the feeling, and so would the reader if he derived extensive powers under a feudal system and then discovered that it was not working properly in its upper reaches. " His Majesty the King-Emperor has great difficulties in these days ": so much they grasp, but they regard the difficulties as abnormal and expect that a turn of the wheel will shake them off. However cleverly they may discuss democratic Europe or revolutionary Russia with a visitor, they do not in their heart of hearts regard anything but Royalty as permanent, or the movements against it as more than domestic mutinies. They cannot understand, because they cannot experience, the modern world.'

It concludes with a sample of Mr. Forster's personal brand of wisdom—a deprecating refusal to be easily wise. The same note is struck elsewhere, as in the capital little sketches ' Advance, India ' and ' The Suppliant,' which might both have come from *A Passage to India*. It is sustained in the most impressive thing in the book, the courageous and useful address, delivered last year to the International Congress of Writers at Paris, on ' Liberty in England,' which contains passages that every civilized person will be grateful to Mr. Forster for. [This recalls Mr. Forster's valuable report of that congress in *The New Statesman and Nation*, July 6th, 1935.] Along with this goes ' A Note on the Way,' which is personal in the best sense. You conclude that Mr. Forster's courage—and courage is readily felt to be an important part of this writer's make-up—is not associated with his irony so much as with his delicate emotional machinery. Certainly it is something in the nature of courage which provides the mainspring: courage to assert the virtue of the finer feelings. Compared with

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the other major novelists of this century Mr. Forster exhibits a lack both of personal vigour and of that intellectual strength which impresses as the best source of vitality ; you can't imagine him making the kind of personal judgments that Lawrence made nor has his irony anything in common with the refreshing sardonic quality of Lawrence's. Nor has he shown a capacity for such an ironical achievement as *Cakes and Ale*, which, side by side with a sardonic criticism of the writer's environment, exhibits positive values convincingly incarnated. Niceness has its drawbacks apparently, in letters if not in life ; Mr. Forster in *Abinger Harvest* shows himself to be the nicest kind of person, but so nice as to be somewhat tame perhaps—or else what accounts for the disappointment the book leaves? Though his public work (*e.g.*, formerly as president of the Society for Cultural Relations with Soviet Russia and till recently as president of the National Council for Civil Liberties) is a reminder that it is not necessarily his most ponderable side that is presented to the reader.

Q. D. LEAVIS.

SHAKESPEARE AS A FORCE OF NATURE

SHAKESPEARE, by John Middleton Murry (Cape, 12/6).

'To try and identify oneself with Shakespeare as a force of Nature—however presumptuous it may sound—is the best way to understand him.' Reading that, we expect the worst ; but it is only fair to say that our expectations are not altogether fulfilled. The introductory chapters, it is true, are concerned to establish the fact that Shakespeare was a poet of a different ***kind*** from most other great poets (except Keats) and therefore demands a different critical approach. It apparently does not occur to Mr. Murry that there is something radically wrong with the implied conception of criticism: one would have thought that a critical method inadequate to deal with Shakespeare would stand self-condemned. The Romantic attitude to Shakespeare, he says, is left intact by modern 'scientific' criticism: are these, then, the only alternatives? Is there nothing between the 'realistic' school, with its archæological

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literal-mindedness, and the identification of ourselves with Shakespeare as a force of Nature?

As one would expect, this attitude prevents any consistent analysis of the plays. We are offered instead the findings of intuition ; there is throughout a suggestion that Mr. Murry is somehow inside Shakespeare's mind, or at least has a private channel of communication from which the rest of the world is debarred—as if the touching interview with Shakespeare in the Epilogue had actually taken place. Thus he is intuitively certain that this incident is autobiographical, that that sonnet belongs to such and such a year, and he is always sure which are the characters with whom Shakespeare identified himself in any play—one chapter, in fact, is called ' The Shakespeare Man.' His intuition even gives us a biography of Shakespeare and a new theory of the sonnet story.

But Mr. Murry, we remember, has written some very valuable criticism, and his intuition is still at times that of a critic. Consequently the book contains several useful observations thrown out by the way, and one regrets that some of them were not developed at greater length. It was a point worth making that Shakespeare's blank verse is ' that of a poet who has learned to write blank verse by speaking it, who therefore, in composing, speaks it rather than writes it.' The criticisms of ' scientific ' verse-tests, and of Professor Dover Wilson and the revisionists in general seem to me entirely justified. The account of the earlier plays is fairly sound, though it shows no great originality and could have been expressed much more concisely, but this diffuseness is characteristic of the whole book. The great tragedies are given a chapter each: that on *Hamlet* is coloured a good deal by Mr. Murry's personal reflections on death, and his interpretation of the first five lines of the ' To be, or not to be ' soliloquy as the crux of the play neglects one important reading which makes the lines explicitly refer to suicide. *Othello*, again, is made the occasion for a discussion of ' the tragedy of human love.' But the most curious judgment in the book is that *King Lear* is ' lacking in poetic spontaneity '—a statement which is given no critical illustration or backing whatever. The remarks on the insistent references to Time in *Macbeth* are illuminating, and the chapters on *Antony and Cleopatra* and the later plays contain some valuable hints

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towards analysis of the poetry. (Mr. Murry has an exasperating way of cutting analysis short with some remark about the foolishness of making ' diagrams of divinity '). The book concludes with an account of Shakespeare's reputation in the seventeenth century.

Mr. Murry's attitude to Shakespeare's characters is curious ; he realizes that they are not to be considered as real human beings, and he apparently accepts much of Stoll: at the same time one cannot always be sure how far from Bradley he really stands, as for instance when he speaks of Shakespeare's ' humanization of melodrama.' It is strange that there is no mention of *The Wheel of Fire*, and no sign of any knowledge of Professor Wilson Knight's work: one would have expected Mr. Murry to find its temper congenial, and his own book would obviously have gained by taking into account the method of considering Shakespeare's plays as poems. Probably his most satisfactory remarks on the characters are those in the chapter on ' Imagery and Imagination,' where he speaks of the character-' sensation ' of Cleopatra, which is embodied in image-' sensation ' ; and this is fairly close to the account by Mr. Granville-Barker in *A Companion to Shakespeare Studies*. One feels that both critics have reached a point at which a synthesis is wanted which would include some consideration of ' themes ' as well.

It will be obvious that this book offers nothing like a new approach to Shakespeare: it is rather a general survey of the type represented by Raleigh's *English Men of Letters* volume. Remembering Mr. Murry's work on Keats, one had hardly dared to contemplate a full-length study of Shakespeare by him ; actually it is somewhat of a relief to find that his personal doctrines and beliefs obtrude comparatively little. This book, in spite of its rhapsodic style, is at least not likely to have a vicious critical influence, and it could even be read with profit by, say, anyone revising for an examination. And there are not so very many books on Shakespeare of which the same can be said.

R. G. Cox.

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CRITICISM OF LIFE

STRANGE GLORY, by L. H. Myers (Putnam, 7/6).

It is difficult to describe Mr. Myers' style briefly. One might compare its urbanity for a moment to that of Mr. Santayana, but in further qualifying this description one would say, I think, that the latter's urbanity had a mellowness, the former's an astringency about it. The most obvious contrast among modern novelists is provided by D. H. Lawrence. Here one would say that whereas Lawrence uses words poetically, is concerned to get a vigorous concrete effect in every part, Mr. Myers is more obviously a prose writer ; his effects emerge gradually by cumulation, one cannot easily illustrate him by quoting a single sentence. In saying that Mr. Myers is urbane one is suggesting his concern for civilization, for a considered fineness in all our thoughts, acts and relationships. By astringency one wishes to indicate a mind that is conscious of all the issues involved in this attitude, that carefully reviews and evaluates every facet of it. The cool certainty of Mr. Myers' prose assures one at every point that he knows exactly what he is dealing with and what he wants to say about it.

Strange Glory is a short book, but one has all the way through it a sense of its living unity ' which grows and evolves itself from within,' although one feels in the first part that the author's style slightly hampers his getting ahead with his main interests. He takes too much space to paint again with delicate satire the world of *The Clio*, civilization with a small ' c.' The transition to a fuller and more profound treatment of the themes is managed by a marvellous piece of reported narrative and dispassionate discussion which re-inforces and at the same time critically places the event referred to. The concentration and economy both of words and incidents becomes more marked as the book develops. The setting is mainly the Louisiana swamp forest, which Mr. Myers uses entirely to suit himself, without troubling to suggest local colour. In it the characters seem to stand outside everyday time and place among primeval nature ' unlittered by the vestiges of human history,' and the trees are ' patriarchal figures brooding on human destiny,' or elsewhere they suggest a dying civilization ' the moss hanging like rotten rags from their white skeleton bones.'

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On a lower plane, a suicidal drunk, seen for a moment at a street corner, symbolizes the whole economic crisis. The chief characters achieve a correspondingly large significance. Wentworth, living in a cabin in the forest and there trying to attain to a realization of the archetypal forms of things by communion with the earth, suggests behind Paulina's progress towards fulfilment in love a background of human experience seen under its universal aspect.

In *The Root and the Flower* Mr. Myers is slowly sifting all humanity and civilization ; the scope is large and judgments emerge gradually and by many means. In the small compass of *Strange Glory* the themes are barer and more explicit. In fact the very explicitness is here a measure of the success with which the author realizes his subtle and penetrating perceptions as he moves from one stage of his story to another. The love of Paulina and Stephen in which they are ' to live and to rejoice,' is seen against a vision of humanity destined to regenerate itself in Russia (' That the new spirit should appear materialistic . . . must not confuse you . . . The new civilization misunderstands itself and its own spirit, and yet . . . ') and both are seen against a vision of ultimate reality when Wentworth, on whom ' the nearness of death seems to confer a special privilege,' says:

> ' " . . . My dear child, for the first time in my life I saw Man through the eyes of God. I saw the exquisite beauty that springs—and can only spring—from the relation of creature and Creator. To man there is given the privilege of worship—that I have known for a long time. But to-night I saw Man as he stands in the vision of compassionate God. Raised very little above the beast of the field, feeble of mind, sickly in body, oppressed by circumstances, blind in spirit ; blackly and inescapably overshadowed by old age, disease and death, Man yet *struggles hard*. Consider the standards that he sets himself . . . " '

But Stephen dies, and one is left with a final affirmation in Paulina's thought for *his* orphaned son. Mr. Myers' sureness springs from this profound faith in humanity. It is not a simple or an easy faith, but it is intensely satisfying. It is the essential tragic philosophy.

GEOFFREY WALTON.

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THE HIGHER EDUCATION OF WOMEN

NEWNHAM, by Mary Agnes Hamilton (Faber and Faber, 5/-).

Mrs. Hamilton's book on Newnham summarizes the history of the college, expresses the admiration and gratitude which must be felt for the early workers in women's education and gives an impression of Newnham to-day. It is perhaps not so easy to share her enthusiasm for present conditions or her reasons for that enthusiasm. As her history proceeds there is a shift in stress: 'the authentic romance' of the eighties is Phillipa Fawcett's achievement in mathematics, 'the high adventure' of the nineteen-tens is breaking college rules, and in 1936 'Newnham, swarming with young men, might take as its emblem the electric iron so efficiently wielded by its elegant and lively students.' Of course, Mrs. Hamilton does not mean this—the whole aim of her book is to show that women can and do excel in intellectual as well as domestic work—but why does she say it? 'The present generation of students,' she writes later, 'has a robustness that is mental as well as physical, yet no impartial observer can say or adduce evidence to prove that charm has been sacrificed to competence.' Possibly not, but it seems unfortunate that the old effort to prove that women are not necessarily intellectually inferior to men should be replaced by another to prove that university women are not necessarily less physically attractive than women who have not had the benefit of the higher education. In the present state of society in England, too, it is a little difficult to reconcile Mrs. Hamilton's regrets for the low percentage of working class students at the older universities with these standards of 'elegance' and 'charm.'

The chapter on the years before the War tells that as the desire for a university education grew 'it became necessary to stiffen the entrance examination so as to make of it a sieve for the selection of the best-fitted entrants.' That examination is still highly competitive, though the number of candidates for women's colleges has decreased slightly this year, but a doubt remains as to how far the sieve is effective. Many with teaching experience will say it is only partially so, that the sifting often does not coincide with their estimate of the girls' ability, and though on the whole

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the best-fitted entrants may be selected there are reasons which make the choice uncertain. One of these is, unfortunately, the stiffness of the examination. It is considered as the culmination of the school examination system for the picked few, and any girl who does not do outstandingly well in both the School and Higher Certificates is seldom encouraged to attempt university entrance. The article on School Certificate English in the last number of *Scrutiny* indicated what a disproportionate emphasis this examination lays on memory ; this is true of other subjects besides English, and is hardly less true of the Higher Certificate which follows automatically in the average school. In the larger public girls' schools the pressure is not usually so great ; the girls come from a wealthier class and may easily acquire a superficial culture from their opportunities for travel abroad, theatre-going, etc. (advantages which will almost inevitably count in an interview), and they may therefore escape the cramming which tends to weigh on the intelligent girl in the secondary school who has probably little cultural background. The university entrance tries to distinguish between individual ability and ' good teaching ' (a doubtful good), but women teachers are often very thorough and even the Oxford General Paper is carefully prepared for. This long period of coaching on the lines suggested by the Certificate examinations does not always stimulate the intelligence or interest ; it may deaden either or both. Students may doggedly continue the note-taking, note-learning methods which seem to appeal more readily to the feminine mind ; and this is perhaps a little encouraged by college authorities who lay stress on at least so many hours work a day and regular attendance at lectures where you can be handed ' after an hour's discourse a nugget of pure truth to wrap up between the pages of your note-books and keep ' to show, if need be, to class-rooms of children in succeeding years. Underlining in red ink and file indexing also take time. On the other hand, students may come up having already covered in some detail a considerable part of their syllabus and, feeling they know all the answers, react from work altogether. These may join with others, few in number, who come up mainly with the purpose of ' having a good time ' and enjoying the ' scarcity value,' to quote Mrs. Hamilton again, ' the spice that the University, in its wisdom, has decided to add to the experience of the minority.'

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In a letter to Anne Richardson, Emily Davies (*Emily Davies and Girton College*, Barbara Stephen) wrote 'You cannot artificially separate boys and girls, and then suddenly throw young men and women together at eighteen.' That was in 1868, but it is not entirely inapplicable in 1936. The English tradition of separating the sexes in boarding schools is obviously not the ideal introduction for a life in which they are expected to work calmly together. But the remedy for this does not lie with the university authorities—petty restrictions on social intercourse between men and women students are worse than useless as is now generally realized. 'The College cannot do more than give quiet liberty and opportunity' is what Madame Bodichon wrote of Girton in its early days; it cannot—that the opportunity is taken and the liberty not abused must rest finally with the students. Too close an anxiety for the name of the college, eminently understandable when one remembers the struggle with which its position has been gained, may retard its development, just as too great an insistence on 'the value of corporate life' invites the atmosphere of the girls' school.

In *A Room of One's Own* Mrs. Woolf maintains that 'intellectual freedom is dependent upon material things' and she compares men's and women's colleges from this aspect. The difference is certainly striking; architecturally Girton and Newnham are hideous, the Oxford women's colleges are mainly undistinguished, and this is indeed deplorable in buildings where good taste should be formed. It is in fact the most serious of the material disadvantages under which women suffer in the university at present, and it is not primarily due to poverty as Mrs. Woolf would suggest. 'I am anxious,' wrote Emily Davies of the building plans for Girton, 'that the building should be as beautiful as we can make it. As we cannot have traditions and associations, we shall want dignity in every other way that is open to us.' She secured Mr. Waterhouse as architect, then considered the noblest of his time, she always insisted on good solid materials and no amount of money spent on the building of Girton then would have made it more beautiful: its appearance is no more due to poverty than that of the new University Library, but to an entirely different cause. The internal furnishings—the pictures, dreary plaster casts, pitch pine and chocolate paint, more pervasively

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depressing than custard and prunes—cannot be excused by either poverty or Victorian taste ; some recent additions to the women's colleges in Oxford and Cambridge, however, show improvement inside and out. More than their superiority in this respect, however, Mrs. Woolf stresses the high standard of comfort in the men's colleges, the good living, the good wine—so helpful to mutual and self-appreciation ; but the impression she gives, subtly and persuasively, is not altogether a favourable one, even when so intended. A certain aspect of academic life emerges—a gloved remoteness—a conscious sipping of the sweets—which is not, one feels, the best background for her women poets of the future.

SYLVIA LEGGE.

INDIAN PROGRESSIVE WRITERS

WHEN ONE IS IN IT, by Iqbal Singh (published by The Indian Progressive Writers' Association, London, 1936, 10/6).

When One Is In It, a short story by a young Indian writer, is the first publication of the Indian Progressive Writers' Association in London. The I.P.W. in their manifesto in *Left Review,* February, 1936, state among their aims, ' the establishment of organizations of writers to correspond to the various linguistic zones of India ' and ' to produce and to translate literature of a progressive nature and of a high technical standard.' To ask what is ' progressive literature ' would hardly be remunerative, but any attempt to form a nucleus of persons seriously interested in literature as such and to link Indian writers with Western literature without damaging the Indian literary tradition rooted in the native soil is to be welcomed. The proper place for the I.P.W.A., however, is in India and not in London, and the ' manifesto ' notes this.

We are supposed to have been experiencing a literary and cultural renaissance in India, comparable to the Elizabethan Renaissance in England according to some brave Anglo-Indian interpreters. All that has really happened is that the basic Indian culture has been vulgarized in all its art-forms by commercialized Western entertainments, *i.e.,* Hollywood films and low-brow

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fiction, and no less by the Indian Universities which prescribe English and not Indian vernaculars as the sole medium of instruction.

Ever since their inception more than fifty years ago, Indian Universities have taught English literature indiscriminately to students *en masse*. Their line of teaching is to ignore all English literature before Wordsworth (exception—' Shakespeare and Milton '), to regard Blake as a minor poet, a mere forerunner of the greater Romantics and to look upon the nineteenth century culminating in Bridges, as the greatest period in its history. Most Indian writers brought up in the universities, and partly under Tagore's influence, have dreamed of princesses sitting in their bowers, and mothers cooing to their children, and under Hollywood influence, of passionate women having unusual adventures in hotels or marble houses in Bombay and Calcutta. This deliberate attempt at being childlike, innocent, naïve and romantic or adventurous and shocking, is what the I.P.W. emphatically deplore.

Fortunately vernacular poetry in India is not, so far, divorced from community life. *Mushairas* (poetical symposia) are still a popular form of entertainment and of disseminating culture. Poets read their poems at mushairas and win the applause or otherwise of crowded houses. But the only poets who make a living out of their published works are those who write ' religious ' poetry. But religious fervour in India, though it does not contribute to the making of a Donne, a Hopkins or even an Iqbal, results in fanaticism and communal riots: it offers dangerous advantages to the foreign power. The I.P.W.A. would make literature the expression of India's dire poverty and economic exploitation, disillusionment and indignation. When Indian writers find their true form they are more likely to discover in their midst a Lawrence or a Turgenev.

What is far more relevant to the aims of the I.P.W.A. is to give the right lead to the best among the Indian intelligentsia, who soon learn to take the measure of their teachers. Universities in India provide absolutely no opportunities to their best students to carry on their education after they have finished their unsatisfactory university course. I have come across scores of such post-graduate students looking for ' direction ' and then gradually finding their way into government offices, insurance companies and

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mofussil law courts, where they spend the best part of their time trying to reconcile themselves to their uncongenial profession. If the I.P.W.A. can draw some of them within their nucleus, as they hope to do, they will in a measure succeed in what they have set out to achieve, and more than justify the blurb of their first publication.

Mr. Iqbal Singh's story is of a young woman standing in a long queue of the unemployed at Bombay, waiting for her turn to be interviewed by the overseer of a silk factory. The approach to human reactions is completely physiological, and I have a suspicion that Mr. Iqbal Singh meant to shock the uninitiated for he seems rather to wallow. The story, however, may be taken as an indirect indictment of the prettiness and æstheticism of recent Indian literature.

Has he overcome the disabilities imposed upon him by the foreign medium, *i.e.*, English language? Usually he writes remarkably good prose: ' Her eyes like a mist wandered across the grey brick wall engirdling the factory, over the irregular outline etched out by tier upon tier of houses and factories, and beyond, right to the very edge of the mutilated horizon,' or ' And as they had led her away from him, she had turned round to look once. Against the starlight, she could distinguish his silent silhouette standing ominously apart from the darkness which enshrouded him.' But he also writes this: ' The chimneys of the adjoining mills were bleak, towering monoliths petulantly belching huge volumes of smoke towards the seraphic denizens of Avahan,' which few will pardon. Probably he deliberately writes such sentences to parody by exaggeration certain mental attitudes which find an easy expression in otherworldliness.

He uses ' time and space,' ' the past, the present, and the future ' as refrains to universalize emotions. Echoes of Aldous Huxley are easily noticeable. In particular the long passage on p. 21, about silk worms fulfilling their Karma in dry, steam-heated chambers, can be related to similar passages in *Point Counterpoint*. I am not using ' echoes ' in a pejorative sense for he makes use of the common Hindustani word ' Karma,' rich in metaphysical associations, with more satiric effect than Huxley does of words such as ' Karma ' and ' Soma ' picked up from Sanskrit mythology.

SOM NATH CHIB.

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THE FABER BOOK OF MODERN VERSE, edited by Michael Roberts (Faber and Faber, 7/6).

THE PROGRESS OF POETRY, edited by I. M. Parsons (Chatto and Windus, 5/-).

Mr. Roberts's anthology costs a half-crown more, but it's decidedly the larger and you get the whole of *The Waste Land* thrown in. This, however, raises the question: What are anthologies of modern verse for? Surely anyone who wants to read *The Waste Land* through—anyone capable of reading a Book of Modern Verse intelligently—has *Poems 1908-1925* already, or at any rate is buying the new collected volume? And surely, too, he wants his *Selected Poems of Ezra Pound*, his Yeats, his Hopkins, his Edward Thomas, his Owen and one or two others whole? Yes, but not everyone can afford them; and there is the beginner who wants to be given a chance to find out which of the poets he is to aim at possessing in larger quantities. It is unfortunate that such a beginner should have so many difficulties—so many booby-traps—put in his way; that he should be invited to do his best to admire, along with Yeats, Hopkins and Eliot, the Sitwells (two of them are in Mr. Roberts's anthology), E. E. Cummings, Day Lewis, George Barker, Laura Riding, Herbert Read, Stephen Spender, and the others whom he must learn to place if ever he is to profit by his reading.

The invitation to admire is not merely a matter of including verse by these writers; in the Introduction he will read: 'the poetry of C. Day Lewis . . . ,' 'The poetry of Edith and Sacheverell Sitwell . . . ,' and 'The poetry of Edith Sitwell, like the poetry of Vachel Lindsay and E. E. Cummings . . . ,' etc. Vachel Lindsay's piece, by the way, comes disastrously just before the first poem of D. H. Lawrence, making it impossible to read this if one has exposed oneself to Lindsay's reverberating boom and thud, which, beating grossly on in the mind, kill Lawrence's delicate rhythms.

The instruction and guidance that Mr. Roberts offers in his very ambitious Introduction is too full of these critical misdirections to be recommended to the innocent: uninformed and uncontrolled by value-judgment, general exposition, about and about the characteristics and derivations of 'modern poetry,' is worth little.

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'The poet has a right to play, and the reader to enjoy that play.' What is denied, we gather, is the reader's right to question whether Mr. Roberts's rompers are poets. 'Doughty, born only a year before Hopkins, resembled him in his inversions, his alliterations, the violence of his syntax, and above all in the emphasis which he succeeded in placing on accumulated masses of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, often unleavened by prepositions or conjunctions.' The difference, we are to understand, is mainly that Doughty lacks the 'intensity' of Hopkins. That fairly represents the quality of Mr. Roberts's guidance.

Anthologies, of course, may have a documentary value. But the reader capable of using an anthology of contemporary verse as documentation of the prevailing fashions hardly needs to have the evidence presented in this way. And he will hardly be grateful on behalf of the hypothetical future student.

For the beginner Mr. Parsons's selection, illustrating 'the growth and development of English poetry during the last fifty or sixty years,' has more value. It contains very much less than Mr. Roberts's, and not much that will get in anybody's way. True, there are one or two inclusions in it that seem pointless. If, for instance, Bridges has to be represented (as illustrating the opposite of development), it seems needlessly unkind to have picked on that fake-Blake, *My Delight and thy Delight*, as one of the three pieces. But the book should be of considerable use to teachers and lecturers, who, of course, cannot ask their pupils to get the collected works of all the poets needing to be discussed. It would have been more useful still if Mr. Parsons had offered a better selection of Hopkins.

It is regrettable that Mr. Parsons too, like Mr. Roberts (whose taste is so inclusive), defers to the general taboo on Bottrall. Bottrall (like all the younger talents) has exasperating faults and (like all the younger talents) has been very disappointing in development. But there is a handful of his poems that would be in any fair and intelligent representation of contemporary work—and such a representation wouldn't include very many names. The taboo looks like a very unpleasant clique phenomenon, characteristic of the cultural situation in which talents fail to develop.

F. R. LEAVIS.

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THE BURNING CACTUS, by Stephen Spender (Faber and Faber, 7/6).

This first collection of Mr. Spender's short stories is of little interest. The mood common to all five is one of frustration and defeat. The themes are tenuous and are concerned with familiar abnormal types. Mr. Spender endeavours to convey the suffering which this civilization may cause these types, but he does not succeed because the characters fail to emerge, let alone convince, nor does he create an adequate impression of their surroundings.

The themes, the characters and their reactions are blurred or almost obliterated by the emotionalism which is the predominent feature of the book, obtruding itself to such an extent as very soon to disperse any interest the reader may have formed. In all the stories continual striving after effect and conscious heightening of sensibility appear as mere exaggeration on the physical plane, and as spuriousness on the emotional plane. This makes the co-operation of the reader of short duration, he is repulsed either in irritation or amusement.

The following quotation from the first and longest story entitled 'The Dead Island,' is a characteristic example. During an evening walk a woman hears two nightingales singing, their songs are likened to 'white satin streamers against the corkscrewing cypresses,' then:

> 'She seemed to lose herself in the ecstacy of sound, and then, from the darkness, her own identity drifted back to her: she was eclipsed by the physical consciousness of her naked self: her black hair, her wide too-ponderous hips, her thick thighs tapering with relief of the knees to the small feet, her small hands, which were her only really ugly feature; now all the defects seemed part of the richness of her whole being, they paid tribute to her delicate ears, the fine nape of her neck, her firm breasts. While the birds were still singing, she pressed both her hands to her neck, and, feeling the silky fall of her hair in the darkness, seemed fulfilled. This experience satisfied her more than her three marriages: she counted her losses, and one which she now accepted was that, spiritually, she had never ceased to be a virgin.'

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To comment on this passage is tempting but unnecessary, it speaks clearly for itself, all too clearly.

Mr. Spender has not yet obtained control of his prose, it is weak and undistinguished, and this fact is not hidden by the false glitter of the many startling and curious metaphors with which it is heavily decorated. He has a lively imagination in this respect and will no doubt receive full measure of praise for the poetic thought his metaphors suggest but do not in fact contain. They are not an integral part of the thought or emotion but are applied ornament and, therefore, do not deepen or enlarge the first statement, they only repeat it in a louder and frequently jarring voice.

> ' After the first flat common words had been laid down like a table-cloth between them . . . '
>
> ' She noticed that the hair of his beard was reddish ; his dark brown eyes, shot with the red blood smeared across their whites, were threatening like the light of street lamp discs struggling redly through yellow fog.'

Similar examples are found on practically every page.

Mr. Spender has the merit of having experimented with the short story, but he has many difficulties to overcome before he can achieve artistic success: the most important step being to learn to subdue his cleverness by imagination.

E. S. HUELIN.

AN ENGLISH TECHNIQUE, by Roy Meldrum (Macmillan, 6/-).

In so many books about education and teaching, one feels a curious abstraction, vagueness, remoteness. The arguments may be plausible ; the ideals, of course, are always most uplifting ; but still, the subject remains dim and foggy. There are a good many reasons for this: we don't know how the mind works ; we have no technique for education ; we haven't decided what sort of beings we want to produce, though we often pretend all these things. We feel, perhaps, that because we are schoolmasters, we are inferior beings, of no real standing in the commonwealth,

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among men who do things, and this makes us blustery or apologetic. So we invoke vague would-be practical aims, and prate of citizenship ; though as guardians of the young we must be impartial, non-controversial, and consequently eschew the backing, the definition, the discipline of a coherent social theory. We musn't be red, we musn't be black (not too openly anyway), we musn't be pink, nor even too aggressively true blue. Motley's your only wear.

You remember those toys, discs of cardboard, with segments printed in the primary colours? You spin the disc, the clear colours disappear, and it is supposed to look white, but in fact it never gets beyond a muzzy indecipherable grey. There you may behold the image of the educationist's mind, always buzzing round, always grey and hazy ; and as sample products of this mind, you have on the one hand, *Poems of To-day*, and on the other, Dr. Norwood's *The English Tradition in Education*.

Mr. Meldrum's mind is not a bit like this. He is intelligent, individual and contemporary (not just up-to-date or fashionable). He knows what he wants done, and he says it plainly, clearly and vigorously. Most important of all, you feel that he is always thinking of, and feeling about, the child, the teacher, and their relationship ; flesh and blood human beings are there all the time.

One thing Mr. Meldrum insists on—time. You must not hurry: you must never do more than the boy can assimilate ; you must never attempt to cram him with ideas beyond his particular stage of development. This is profoundly true. The sad thing is, that with the School Certificate looming always on the horizon, it is in practically every case impossible. .

T. R. BARNES.

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